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THE

CIVILIZATIONS OF THE EAST

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China

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THE

CIVILIZATIONS OF THE EAST

By René Grousset

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY CATHERINE ALISON PHILLIPS

Plan of the Complete Work

VOLUME I
The Near and Middle East

VOLUME II
India

VOLUME III
China

VOLUME IV
Japan

NEW YORK · ALFRED A KNOPF

THE

CIVILIZATIONS OF THE EAST

China

By René Grousset

Director of the Musée Cernuschi, Paris, and Honorary Director of the Musée Guimet, Paris

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH FOR THE FIRST TIME BY CATHERINE ALISON PHILLIPS

With 280 Illustrations

19 35

NEW YORK · ALFRED A KNOPF

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INTRODUCTION

The Civilizations of the East

Volume III: China

THE PRESENT VOLUME OF THIS WORK, LIKE THOSE WHICH preceded it, has as its sole ambition to serve as a general introduction to the study of Asiatic art. That is to say, it does not merely reduplicate the much more detailed archæological textbook in which the author is collaborating with Professors Elisséev, Hackin, Georges Salles, and Philippe Stern for the publishing house of Auguste Picard.

It is, moreover, only fair to point out that this work has profited by Professor Paul Pelliot's lectures on Chinese art delivered in connexion with the Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises at the Sorbonne from 1927 to 1929, and M. Charles Vignier's expositions based upon the works of art themselves.

It is doubtless becoming that I should apologize for having attempted a sketch of the evolution of China based upon the archæological data. Contrary to what might be supposed at first sight, the method which takes archæology as its starting-point has a comparatively modest contribution to make towards academic reconstructions and personal points of view.

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to the various museums and collectors who have kindly permitted me to reproduce certain pieces from their collections in Europe and in America. In Japan

my thanks are particularly due to the *Shimbi Shōin* Publishing Company, the directors of which, thanks to the kind offices of Professor Sylvain Levi, have allowed me to use certain of their fine reproductions of Chinese paintings.

NOTE. The spelling adopted for the Chinese names follows in the main, save for a few special exceptions, that used by H. A. Giles in his *Chinese-English Dictionary*, second edition, 1912.



THE

CIVILIZATIONS OF THE EAST

China



CHAPTER I

Formation of the Chinese Æsthetic Ideal

ORIGINS OF ART IN THE FAR EAST

PREHISTORIC CHINA

THE GREAT ANTIQUITY OF CIVILIZATION IN THE FAR EAST, WHICH was for long affirmed as a dogma and afterwards denied with equally little proof, has at last been established on a positive basis, thanks to a series of discoveries.

In the course of their palæontological excavations in the Ordos region, in the great bend of the Yellow River, the Jesuit Fathers Licent and Teilhard de Chardin brought to light a great number of palæolithic implements, flint arrow-heads and clubs, of the types associated with the palæolithic sites of Le Moustier and Aurignac in France, and hence generally known as Mousterian and Aurignacian. This analogy in no way implies, however, that the two civilizations were contemporaneous. If we wish to make any attempt at fixing the date of the palæolithic age in China, we must turn to geology. The finds made by Messrs. Licent and Teilhard de Chardin were buried beneath a deposit of loess, in places as much as from forty-three to seventy-five yards deep. Since the formation of such a deposit must

have required thousands of years, we may see how ancient are the earliest signs of human handiwork in the Far East.[1]

Separated from this palæolithic culture by an interval represented by the whole period of formation of loess, there next appears the neolithic and aeneolithic culture discovered by Professor J. G. Andersson during 1920 and the following years.

Andersson's finds extend over a very wide area, embracing the whole of northern China: Kan-su, Ho-nan, Shan-si, and southern Manchuria, the two most interesting sites being Ch'i-chia-p'ing (or Ts'i-kia-p'ing) in Kan-su and Yang-shao-ts'un in Ho-nan. At the lower level, represented by Ch'i-chia-p'ing, we find the last phase of the neolithic. Unpainted jugs have been dug up of grey or reddish clay, with handles standing out boldly in a vigorous line and with what decoration they have, if any, scratched with the finger-nail or by a tool and primitively geometrical in character. It is a ware of a rude simplicity, and an unpractised eye would hardly distinguish it from the ordinary run of European neolithic vases. But let us not forget that we are in China. This simplicity, verging on an austere sobriety, and this strength and boldness of form, which display the intrinsic quality of the material to the best advantage, proclaim the eternal virtues of the æsthetic sense of the Far East.[2]

During the following period, which belongs to the aeneolithic age and is referred to as the Yang-shao period (though it can show as many specimens in Kan-su as in Ho-nan), a revolution took place: painted pottery made its appearance, and produced at a stroke masterpieces worthy of the ceramic art of the Ægean.

As Professor Andersson has pointed out, many of these pots of the

[1] See G. Elliot Smith's excellent summing-up of the evidence in "The Discovery of Primitive Man in China" (*Sinanthropus pekinensis* of Chou-Kou-tien), an article in *Antiquity* for March 1931, pp. 21–37.

[2] Cf. Andersson: *Preliminary Report on Archæological Research in Kansu*, Pl. V, Fig. 3, and the similar vase, formerly in the Wannieck collection, now in the Musée Cernuschi, Paris. It may be added that a collection of neolithic Chinese vases has just been presented to the Musée du Louvre, Paris, by M. David-Weill.

Yang-shao period, especially in Kan-su, have a gourd- or calabash-like shape, broadening towards the base. At the same time the texture is often reminiscent of basket-work (see Volume I of the present work, Fig. 17, 18, 19). But the decoration, generally in black or

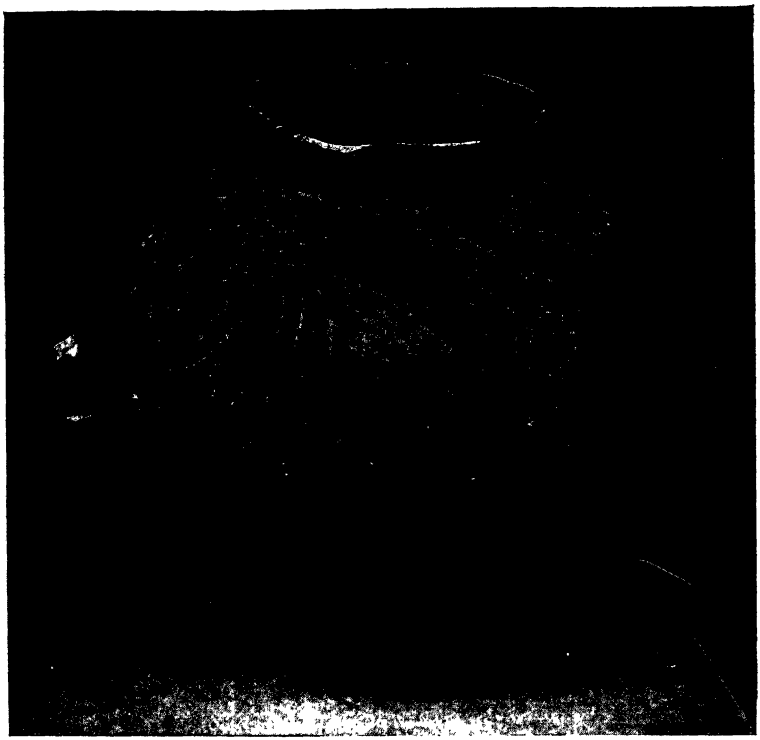


FIGURE 1
Aeneolithic vase, Yang-shao style.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

brown on a lighter background of a reddish or brownish tone, soon acquired an unexpected elegance. We find spirals coiling and uncoiling round the sides of the vase in lines that are most pleasing to the eye (Fig. 1 and Volume I, Fig. 20), lines rising and falling on

the swelling sides with a wave-like movement full of life, scalloped lines with a remarkably gay effect, striations, stripes, cords, or "snake-skins" which already possess the vibrant quality of great art. The coiling spirals, in particular, have the powerful rhythm of the marine decorations on Ægean pottery, as well as their freedom. The Ho-nan ware of the same period (more properly known as Yang-shao) is slightly different. Instead of the spirals of Kan-su, we find either raised, hatched lines, more directly reminiscent of basket-work, or else a more complicated style of ornament, in red or black on white slip, with curious elliptical motives in a lenticular, leaf-shaped form, possibly representing cowries, other eye-shaped lenticular patterns surrounded by long rays or cilia, or else the motive, which recurs throughout the whole of Asia, of triangles joined "butterfly-fashion," but often forming a sort of protuberance where they touch.[1]

Indeed, most of these decorative motives seem to belong to a common stock, at once European and Asiatic, found in all aeneolithic civilizations. The Ho-nan motives in what is known as the Yang-shao stage, to which we have just referred — the basket-work texture, the ciliated lenticular patterns, and those resembling cowries — remind us to some extent of the pottery of Anau near Askabad in Russian Turkestan, and still more of the pottery of Tripolje, near Kiev.[2]

Whatever we may think about these analogies or affinities, yet, though the Ho-nan vases of the Yang-shao period lack the splendid movement of the contemporary Kan-su vases, with its more powerful and sustained quality, their workmanship, as we have said, is more finished: the material is finer, and the colour proves to be richer. We may instance a reddish pot with a brown trellis pattern,[3] the harmony

[1] In his *An Early Chinese Culture*, British Geological Survey of China, p. 59, Fig. 13, Andersson compares these with a similar motive at Susa.

[2] Cf. Andersson: *An Early Chinese Culture*, B.G.S.C., Pl. XIII; Perceval Yetts, "Painted Neolithic Pottery in China," *Burlington Magazine*, December 1925, p. 309: Fig. 2; Andersson: "*Prähistorische Kulturbeziehungen zwischen Nordchina und dem näheren Orient*," in *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift, N.F. 5 Jahrg.; Heft 2*, 1929, p. 49.

[3] Arne: *Painted Stone Age Pottery from Honan*, Pl. 1.

of whose tones makes it a delight to the eye. Or another with an iron-grey background and a double border in red supported by hook-shaped patterns (Fig. 2),[1] whose elegant simplicity would seem to foreshadow one of the qualities afterwards displayed by the Chinese ceramics of the Middle Ages. Yet here we find a play of line which was never to appear again afterwards. In like fashion the lozenge-

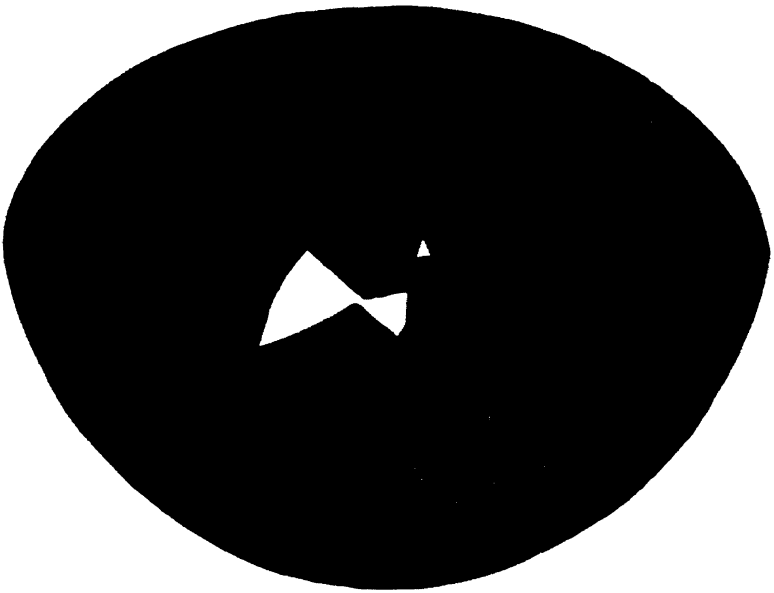


FIGURE 2
Painted ware from Ho-nan. Stockholm.
— *Photo, Andersson*

shaped diaper-patterns (Fig. 3), the comb-like striations, the leaf-shaped lenticular motives, and the various others mentioned above, in red or black on a calcareous slip,[2] are a revelation of a highly decorative style, skilfully and delicately geometrical, and of a harmonious range of colour characteristic of a civilization at its culminating point.

[1] Ibid., Pl. 2.

[2] Ibid., Pl. 4–6.

By a curious conjuncture this same Yang-shao group in Ho-nan contains, side by side with painted pottery of this special character, which does not occur again later, some unpainted vases the shapes of

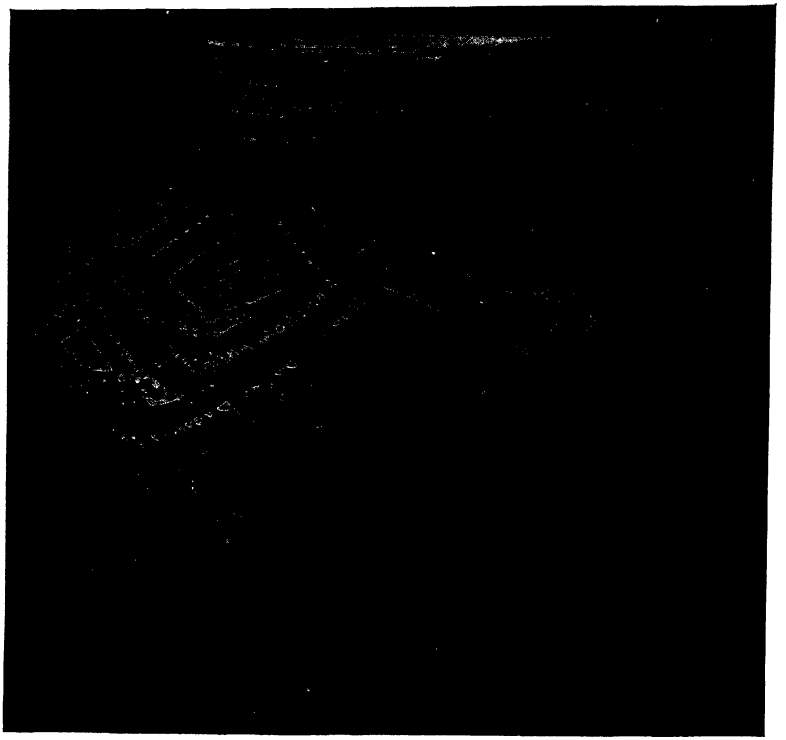


FIGURE 3
Prehistoric decoration with lozenge-shaped trellis-work.
Kan-su; so-called Yang-shao style.
— *Louvre*

which recall those of the archaic bronzes of the following period. Thus we find appearing among the pottery of Yang-shao those three-footed forms of vase known in the classic art of China as *li* and *ting* (cf. Fig 6 and 7), and even having those striations, said to repre-

sent matting, which we shall find again on the body of certain bronzes.[1]

In the next period, for which the typical site is that of Ma-ch'ang in Kan-su, the painted pottery has a decadent tendency. We still find the body of the vases (which are distinguished by a curious atrophy

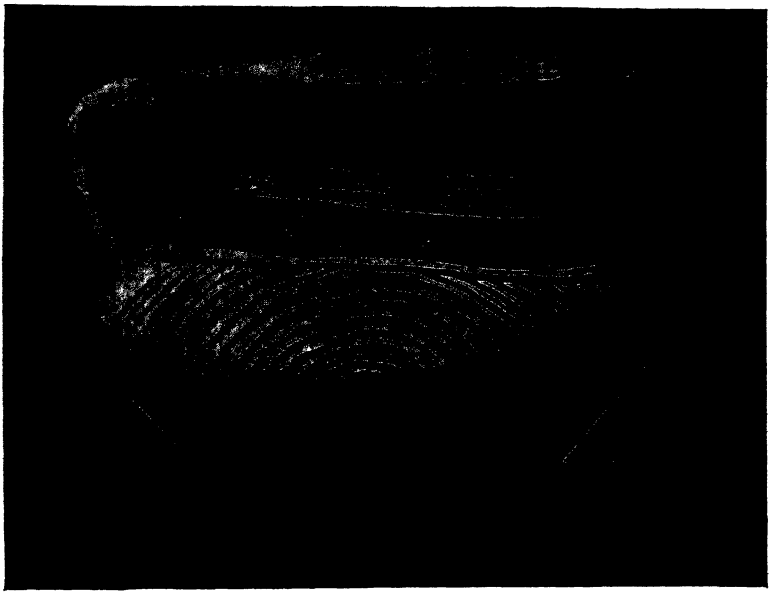


FIGURE 4
Aeneolithic pottery from Kan-su.
— *Wannieck collection*

of the handles) adorned with scalloped wavy lines or striped patterns of an undeniably rich decorative effect, but the splendid spirals of the earlier period have disappeared.[2] Later still, in the stage typified by the site of Hsin-tien, also in Kan-su, an entirely novel style of decoration appears, in which we no longer find either the coiling

[1] Cf. Professor Pelliot's lecture at the Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises (Sorbonne), March 21, 1927.

[2] Andersson: *Preliminary Report on Archæological Research in Kansu*, Pl. IX.

spirals of former days or the fanciful striped patterns of the following period, or even the patient detail of lozenges or lenticular motives, as in Yang-shao work. Instead of these we find severe, elegant vases with broad handles and more elongated forms, in which the ornament consists of a few powerful, sober lines: a sort of Greek fret, less close than that familiar on Dipylon ware,[1] runs round the neck; curves and intricate patterns are here abandoned for straight or broken lines, which aim at producing a decorative effect merely by the assertion of their own quality. An exception to these remarks is provided by a motive striking across the body of the vase, suggestive of " moufflon's horns," very wide apart and curved.[2]

It seems as though this was the last lot of painted pottery produced in the " proto-Chinese " period. For the next period, known as the Ssu-wa period, from the name of the site in Kan-su, Andersson found nothing but vases with no decoration. But it is true that the use of copper was becoming general at this very time.

On the vases from Hsin-tien there also appear highly conventionalized representations of animals: horses, birds, and representations of the human figure,[3] the conventionalized quality of which has something in common with the Dipylon style, but which are really comparable to those of the second site at Susa, known as " Susa II." A little later, at Sha-ching (Sha-tsing), still in Kan-su, these representations of animals assume a certain elegance and may be classed as decorative motives. This is true of the processions of conventionalized birds published by Andersson,[4] which recall the processions of aquatic birds on the pottery of " Susa I " and " Susa II."

Two problems present themselves in connexion with this prehistoric Chinese art: how far is it connected with the aeneolithic art of western

[1] See the comparative designs in Andersson: *Preliminary Report on Archæological Research in Kansu*, p. 16, Fig. 4.
[2] Ibid., Pl. III, 2, and IV.
[3] Ibid., p. 17, Fig. 5.
[4] *Burlington Magazine*, December 1925, p. 310, Fig. 3.

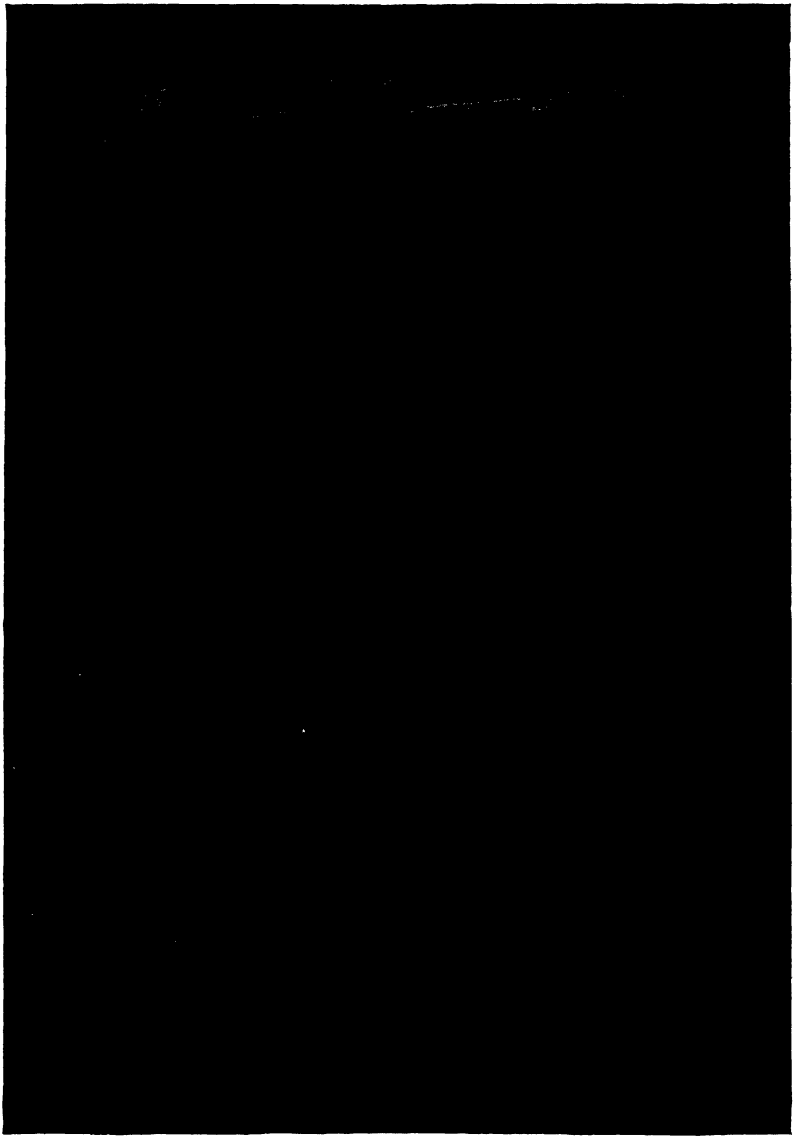


FIGURE 5

Aeneolithic pottery from Kan-su.
— *Wannieck collection*

Asia and Europe; and what were its relations with the Chinese art of historic times? We may say at once that any positive answer to either of these questions would be premature. To point out the distant affinities between Chinese aeneolithic art and that of Anau, Susa, and, in particular, Tripolje, is not such a conclusive argument as it would seem to be. As a matter of fact, as we have shown in the first volume of the present work (pages 24–6), between the fifth and the third millenniums B.C. almost the whole of Europe and Asia possessed a general civilization characterized by painted pottery; the final confirmation of our hypotheses on this point having been provided by the discoveries of Professor Herzfeld. The remarkable civilization, assumed to be neolithic, and not even containing any traces of copper as yet,[1] found by the German archæologist during his excavations at Damāghān, Persepolis, and other points on the Persian plateau in 1927 and 1928 justifies us in supposing that most of the centres of prehistoric civilization which now seem to us to be isolated must have been linked together by a series of intermediate states of culture. Thus the decorative motives of Persepolis and Damāghān (geometrical motives, ibex, moufflon, suppliants, etc.) are brought into connexion with those of Susa I and Susa II, though chronologically, according to Herzfeld, they are perhaps anterior to these.[2] But this idea of a continuous aeneolithic culture, extending from Tripolje to Ho-nan and from Kan-su to Susa, should certainly not make us jump to the conclusion that any one centre was subordinate to any other. It is infinitely more reasonable to grant that each of them was independent, while remaining within the sphere of a general culture more or less common to all. Hence this Chinese centre must maintain its virtual independence till further notice — all the more so since the craniological researches of Mr. Davidson Black would tend to prove

[1] It is true that this opinion of Professor Herzfeld's is far from being unanimously accepted by specialists.

[2] Herzfeld, in *Illustrated London News*, November 19, 1927, May 25, 1929, June 1, 1929.

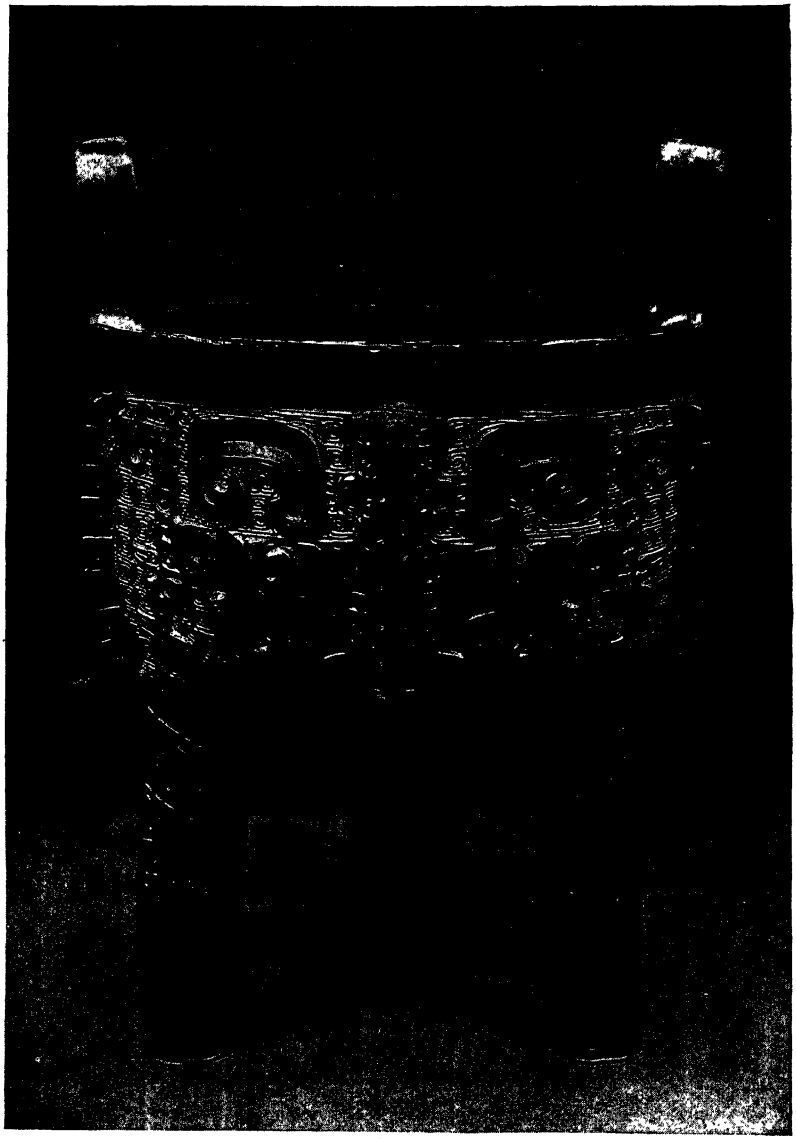


FIGURE 6

Three-footed *ting;* bronze. Formerly in the Tuan Fang collection.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

that the human race associated with the neolithic and aeneolithic ceramice of Ho-nan and Kan-su was already Chinese in appearance.[1]

If the last-mentioned conclusion were to be confirmed, this would enable us to approach the second problem with greater confidence:

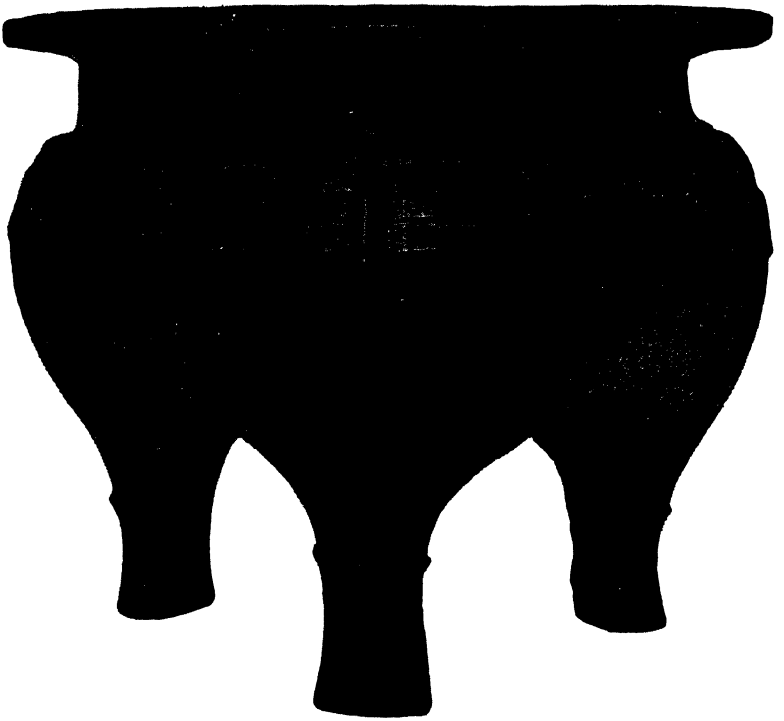


FIGURE 7
Three-footed *li.*
— *Sumitomo collection*

that of the relations between Chinese prehistoric art and the Chinese art of historic times. But this at the same time raises the whole problem of chronology, and we have no data on which to base an answer. Professor Andersson's hypotheses, following which he dated Ch'i-chia-

[1] Davidson Black: *The Physical Characters of the Prehistoric Kansu Race*, British Geological Survey of China, A, 5, June 1929.

p'ing (T'si-kia-p'ing) about 3500, Yang-shao about 3000, and Hsin-tien about 2000, were arrived at solely on the strength of the chronology of Susa; but on the one hand this chronology has since been revised, and on the other hand it by no means follows that analogous cultures such as those of Susa and prehistoric China should necessarily be regarded as contemporaneous. We may therefore postpone the problem of dates for later consideration, so that, as data for estimating what links may exist between the China of this prehistoric pottery and the China of the bronze vessels, we are left with the affinities pointed out above, and in particular with that between the bronzes of the archaic period and the pottery of Yang-shao and Hsin-tien, as indicated by certain forms of the latter (the three-footed vases) and certain of its decorative motives (e.g., the *lei-wen* or "thunder-pattern" and the motive resembling a letter S lying on its side).[1]

THE YIN AND THE CHÓU PERIOD

THE HISTORY OF CHINA IN THE ARCHAIC PERIOD, AS RELATED IN THE traditional accounts, is too great a mixture of legends, romances, and later recensions with a moral aim for it to be possible to make use of it with confidence. M. Henri Maspero's preliminary critical work[2] has made it plain how little reliance is to be placed upon the traditions concerning not only the mythical "Five Leaders," but also the three royal dynasties of Hsia (twentieth to sixteenth century?), Shang or Yin (sixteenth to eleventh century?), and Chóu (eleventh to third century). The same objections are to a large extent true for the second half of the Chóu period too, during what is called by common consent "the period of the leaders" (seventh century B.C.) and the "period of the contending states" (fifth to third century). But though the traditional annals cannot serve as a trustworthy guide, yet, for

[1] Cf. Zoltan von Takacs: "*Urchinesisches in der chinesischen Kunst*," in *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst- und Kultur-Geschichte Asiens*, Vol. III, 1928, p. 40.

[2] H. Maspero: *La Chine antique* (Paris: E. de Boccard; 1927).

this latter period at least, they are of considerable interest from the social and moral point of view. The very fact that they are full of historical romances, which can hardly be disentangled from the main narrative, is a guarantee that, in default of any certainty about facts and dates, we shall find in them a highly coloured picture of the society of the times. It was a cruel and complicated feudal society, still crushed beneath the terrors which haunt the primitive mind, and, what is more, living amid the miseries of a bloodthirsty system of law — a permanent condition of private war accompanied by an unprecedented indulgence in mass murder. In order to obtain an idea of Chinese life in the archaic period, which has been so fraudulently distorted for the benefit of later ages by the virtuous homilies of the Confucian period, we must follow the sociological school of scholars in the laborious but useful reconstitution of the methods by which the war-lords secured those " increases of prestige " which were necessary to their triumph. No other society offers us such a spectacle of cruelty save that of Mexico before the days of Columbus. And side by side with this utter contempt for human life, we find a tense determination, a concentrated fire, a superabundance of force, an implacable violence, which, in spite of all later attempts to tone them down, were to keep the soul of China keyed up to the highest pitch of energy till the opening of the Ming period. This underlying element of violence and contempt for human life was no obstacle to the creation by ancient China, through Confucianism, of a positive — and even positivist — social morality, from which the mythologies of antiquity were entirely banished. But Confucianism was precisely a deliberate reaction against the tumultuous tendencies of society and the beliefs of the archaic period.

Such were the psychological and social conditions which gave birth to the æsthetic ideal of China in the archaic period, as revealed in the art embodied in the inscriptions on bone and the primitive bronzes.

THE INSCRIPTIONS ON BONE OF THE YIN PERIOD

THE FIRST SITE TO PRODUCE FINDS THROWING ANY LIGHT ON THE HISTORIC age of China is undoubtedly Hsiao-t'un, a village in northern Honan, near Chang-te-fu, which would seem to coincide with an ancient capital of the Yin dynasty (twelfth century B.C.). It yielded on the one hand a white ware in which the old prehistoric three-footed form persists, with grooving somewhat in imitation of basket-work; and on the other hand fragments of bone, flakes of tortoise-shell, ivory, rhinoceros horns, etc., all with inscriptions on them and used in divination. The carved bones discovered on the same site are also found in the form of hairpins. All these classes, which were recently examined by the Chinese archæologist Lo Chen-yu, are now fairly plentifully represented in European museums, and notably in the East Asiatic Museum at Stockholm, as well as in the University Museum, Kyoto, and the Ontario Museum, Toronto. So far as Paris is concerned, we may mention an inscribed fragment in this style presented by Professor Hackin to the Musée Guimet, and the very fine mask of a *t'ao-t'ieh,* or monster, in the Louvre, though this is perhaps a little later in date.[1]

For the decorative motives discovered at Hsiao-t'un — and this is the essential point about these discoveries — seem even at this early date to have been the same as we shall find later in the Chóu bronzes. All the motives which we shall find most widely prevalent in Chinese works of art for more than twenty centuries — masks of monsters known as *t'ao-t'ieh,* conventionalized dragons indicated by geometrical "lines of force," gaping dragons' mouths bristling with threatening fangs, the "thunder-pattern" known as *lei-wen,* elegant cicadas with folded wings — all these motives seem to have appeared as early as the bones and ivories of Hsiao-t'un. When we consider that the

[1] G. Migeon, *Musée du Louvre: Chinese Art,* p. 14 and Pl. I.

works of which we are speaking may date on an average from the twelfth century B.C., this should furnish a valuable sidelight on the formation of the Chinese æsthetic canon. Of course we are here dealing with decoration that is still of a rudimentary character, and we feel inclined to agree with Professor Sirén[1] in supposing that these rectilinear motives, with their sharp angles, were originally the product of decoration in wood, from which they were translated into terms of carved bone and clay, and lastly, when the art of bronze-casting was developed, extended to metal.

What we have just said about ornament in wood would apply still more to the white pottery which forms part of the same group, and in which, as a matter of fact, the decoration is exactly the same: lozenges and zigzag lines in relief, *lei-wen*, geometrical motives of *t'ao-t'ieh* and dragons, etc.[2] According to a suggestion of Professor Sirén's, it is very probable that this extremely archaic white pottery served as a direct model for the bronzes.

In the highly primitive simplicity of these subjects we may divine the process by which this specifically Chinese canon of decorative art took shape beneath the chisel of some wood-carver in all its geometrical and rectilinear quality, so different from all that has been produced by the art of other countries, and brought to the highest perfection in the Chóu period.

THE ARCHAIC BRONZES: VARIOUS TYPES

THE CHINESE ART OF HISTORIC TIMES — THE GREAT ART OF CHINA — really starts with the bronzes, in the form of vases or various receptacles, bells, and mirrors.

The ritual types of these bronzes were fixed at a very early date, no doubt as early as the dynasty of the Shang or Yin (approximately

[1] *Ars Asiatica*, edited by Victor Goloubew, VII, pp. 10–11.

[2] *Ars Asiatica*, VII (Sirén collection), Nos. 562–7, which should be compared with the carved bones in Nos. 270–2.

between 1558 and 1051) and certainly by the time of the Chóu dynasty (about 1050–256). The importance of these types is so great that we must describe them carefully before embarking upon any examination of them. No doubt their shapes were originally dictated by custom and the purpose for which they were used, but, however that may be, they are so closely bound up with the Chinese artistic canon, which they at once dictate and express with striking power, that an understanding of them almost enables us to understand the whole art of the Far East from the very beginning.

For they go back to the humblest and at the same time most venerable origins of Chinese culture, not only in virtue of the domestic and sacred purposes for which they were used, but also from the archæological point of view.[1] In fact, through the most ancient of these types of bronze vase, the three-footed *ting* and *li*, the art of the bronze-founders of archaic times is linked up with that of the potters of prehistoric ages.[2]



FIGURE 8
Three-footed *hsien.*
— *Sumitomo collection*

The *ting* is a cauldron, often hemispherical in shape, and standing on three feet — generally massive cylinders standing on end — either directly welded to the body of the cauldron or else issuing

[1] See W. Perceval Yetts: "Classes and Uses of Ancient Vessels," in *The George Eumorfopoulos Collection; Catalogue of the Chinese . . . Bronzes*, I, 40; E. A. Voretzsch: *Altchinesische Bronzen* (Berlin, 1924); Sueji Umehara: "Chemical Analysis of the Ancient Chinese Bronzes," in *Artibus Asiæ*, 1927, 4.

[2] Andersson: *An Early Chinese Culture*, Pl. VII and VIII.

from the jaws of the monsters known as *t'ao-t'ieh*. The *ting* has also two looped handles rising upright from its brim, by which the vessel could be carried to the fire or lifted off it; for it was used for boiling drinks, but mainly for cooking meat (Fig. 6 and 27).

The *li*, too, was a circular vessel standing on three feet, but differing from the *ting* in that its feet were hollow and were thus merely a

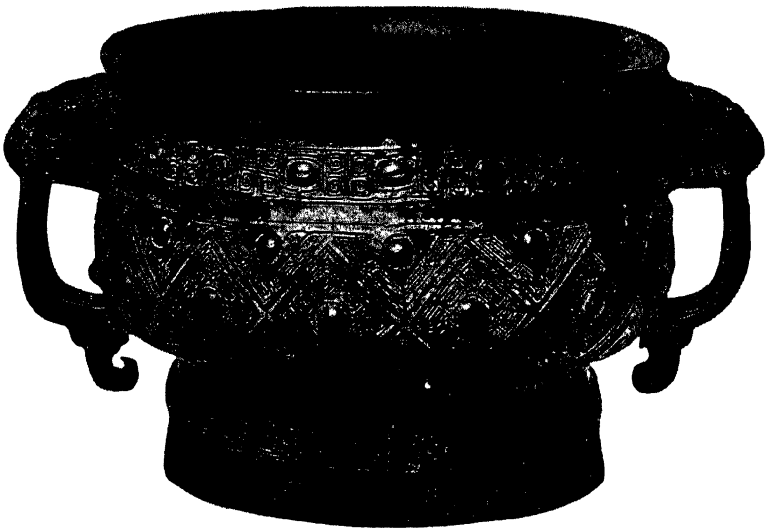


FIGURE 9
Type of *tui* vase.
— *Sumitomo collection*

prolongation of the body. It was used chiefly for heating drinks and in the second place for cooking meat (Fig. 7). The three-footed *li* sometimes has a circular cooking-pot fitted on the top of it; the double vessel thus formed is called a *hsien* (*hien*) (Fig. 8).

After these three types of cooking-pot and cauldron come various kinds of bowls for offerings of fruit, vegetables, corn, etc.

First of all there are the bowl-shaped vessels, such as the *yi* and *tui* (*tuei*). The *yi* is a bowl standing on a hollow base and adorned

with two looped handles issuing from the mouth of a dragon. The *tui* is a *yi* on a larger scale, of a more elongated shape, in which the handles have often developed the form of an animal's snout or trunk (Fig. 9, 10, and 26).

One of the most familiar of these vessels is the *tsun*, a term originally applied to several types (Fig. 11–12), but which came in the

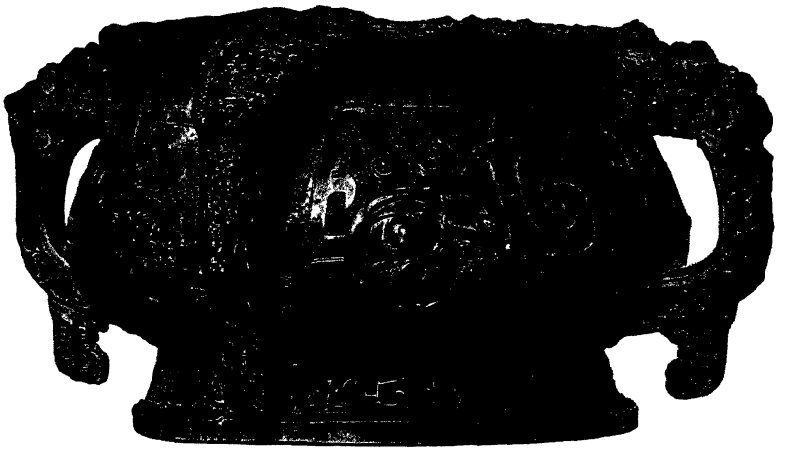


FIGURE 10
Type of *tui*.
— *Eumorfopoulos collection. Photo, Eumorfopoulos*

end to be applied mainly to a type of goblet with a bell-shaped foot, a convex body forming a projecting band round the middle, defined by a narrower ring above and below it, and a cup-shaped neck opening in a very wide bell-mouth. The *tsun* seems to have been a wine-jar.

The *ku* is a taller and more slender variety of the *tsun*, in which the body has shrunk to a slender flute and the neck curves open into a more elegant bell-shaped mouth (Fig. 11 b). The various vases known as *hu* and *lei* are less clearly defined, these names being applied to all sorts of vases with full bodies and short narrow necks (Fig. 32–33).

There are two forms of "soup-tureen," of a squat, dumpy shape, among which are certain of the *lei* and also of the *yu*. The *lei* to which we refer occur in the form of round vessels of a squat shape, with full body and no handles, mounted on a low base and having a lid (Fig. 14). The *yu* are a sort of bronze "tea-pot" somewhat similar in shape, with the same body, base, and lid, but having also a handle,

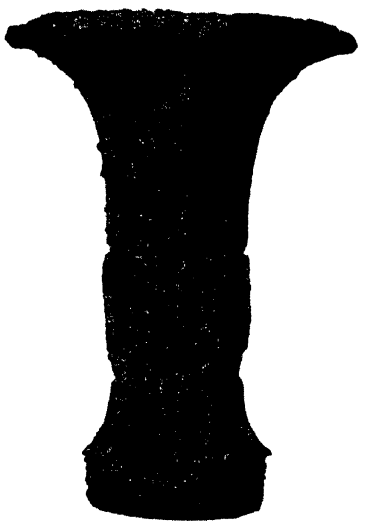


FIGURE 11
Type of *tsun*, with trumpet-mouth.
— *Eumorfopoulos collection*

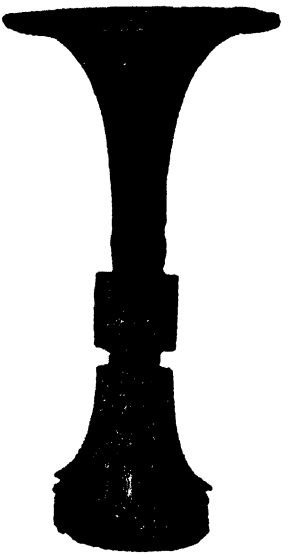


FIGURE 11b
Type of *ku*.
— *Sumitomo collection*

often attached to the body of the vase by two animals' heads. These *yu* were used as wine-jugs for the sacrifice (Fig. 15). With them may be grouped the *hsien* (*hien*), cylindrical vessels with or without lids, having the same kind of handle attached by animals' heads. They should not be confused with the three-footed vases of the same name reproduced in Fig. 8.

Two other specifically Chinese forms are the *chio* and the *chia*, or

kia. The *chio* (*tsio*), or *chüeh,* is an elegant winecup standing on three feet, with a decorated band round the body, a handle of smaller dimensions at the side, and an opening ornamented with two projecting knobs, with one of its sides prolonged into a curved lip, and the other into a point of unequal length (Fig. 16). The *chia* may be



FIGURE 12
Type of *tsun* with lid.
— *Sumitomo collection*

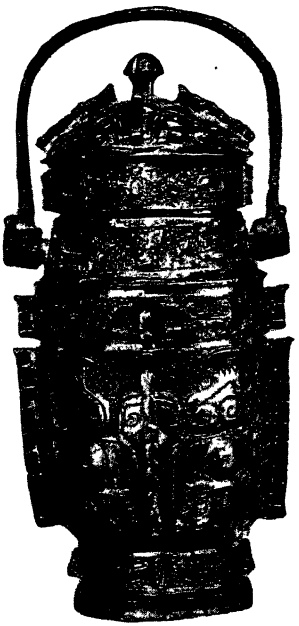


FIGURE 12b
Lien vase.
— *Sumitomo collection*

defined as a *chio* with a mouth of an ordinary rounded cup shape, without any lip or point (Fig. 17).

To complete this enumeration, we should also mention various less characteristic shapes, such as the *fu,* the *tou* (or *teou*), and the *ho.* The *fu* is an oblong trough standing on four feet and intended to hold offerings of boiled grain. The *tou* in its most typical form is a

round cup surmounted by a domed lid and standing on a high base like that of a candelabra, the whole effect being something like that of a Catholic chalice. Lastly, the *ho* is in the form of a sort of tea-pot standing on three feet, with a spout, handle, and lid.

After these vessels comes an important series of bronze objects

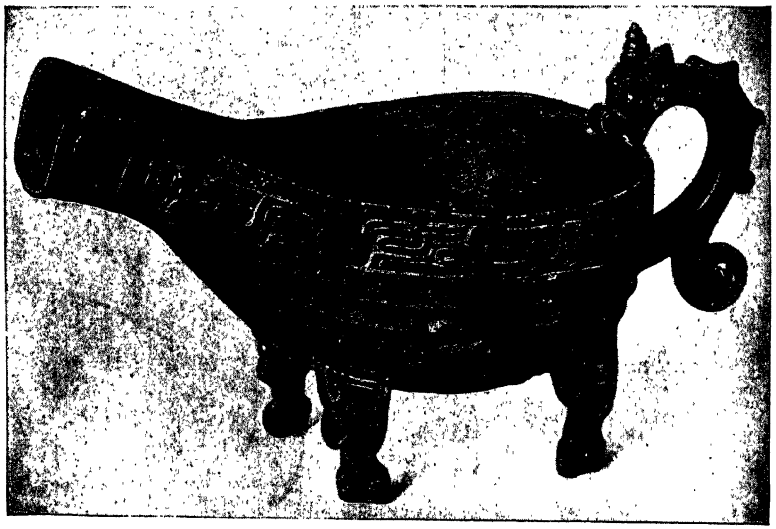


FIGURE 13
Yi (*I*) wine-vessel. Ch'in (Ts'in) or Han period.
— *Eumorfopoulos collection. Photo, Eumorfopoulos*

represented by the bells known as *chung*, formed of two rectangular sides joined in such a way as to produce an elliptical section, and adorned, in addition to the usual motives on the bronzes, with bosses resembling nail-heads, of whose significance we are ignorant (Fig. 18–19).[1] There is also a series of bronze drums, or *ku*, which seem hardly to have existed before the Han period. Possibly they were not of Chinese origin, but were borrowed by the Chinese from the native

[1] See the section on bells in Mr. Perceval Yetts's Introduction to *The Eumorfopoulos Collection, Catalogue of the Chinese . . . Bronzes*, I, 1.

races of southern China and Indo-China (a subject discussed by Professor Pelliot in his lecture on Chinese art of April 25, 1927). However this may be, their decoration often displays a simplicity and symmetry which, as we shall see, were to characterize the Han canons of art. As for the mirrors (*chien*, or *kien*), these cannot properly be discussed before the Han period.

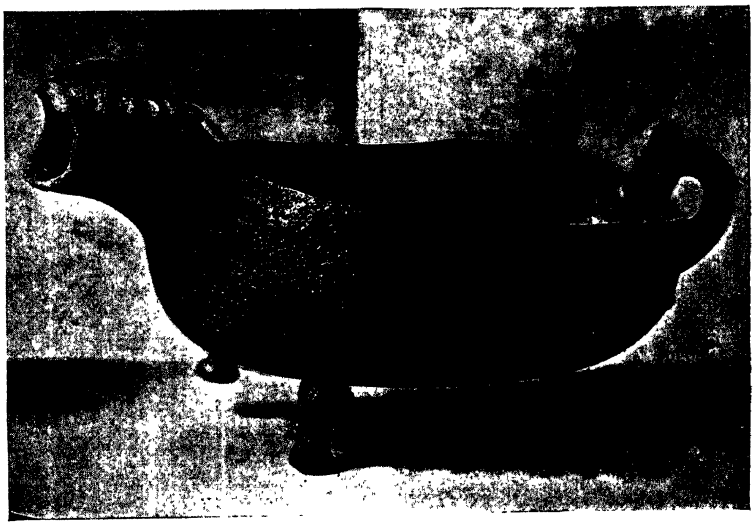


FIGURE 13b

Yi (*I*) wine-vessel. Han period.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

THE ARCHAIC BRONZES: DECORATIVE MOTIVES

THE ARCHAIC BRONZES SUCH AS ARE FOUND AT THE CHÓU PERIOD display a system of decoration which, except in one respect, differs almost entirely from that of the prehistoric vases. It is a system complete in itself and, being admirably adapted to the form of the object, is a revelation of a canon of art at once powerful and original.

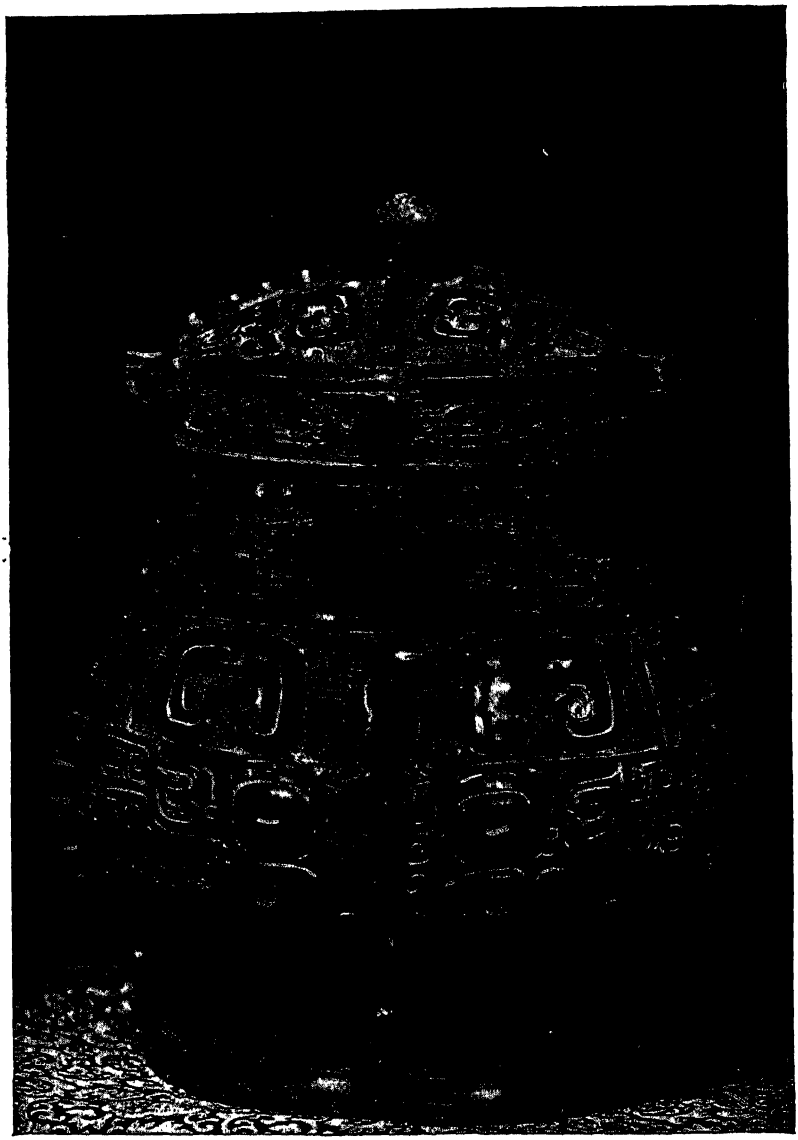


FIGURE 14

Type of *lei*.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

The motives seem to have been quite specifically Chinese. First comes the labyrinthine *lei-wen*, signifying thunder or the storm-cloud, in the form of an angular scroll or Greek fret (see Fig. 6, 9, 14, etc.). This motive was already to be found on prehistoric painted pottery,



FIGURE 15
Type of *yu*.
— *Eumorfopoulos collection*

notably at Hsin-tien,[1] and forms the exception referred to above. Mr. Perceval Yetts considers it natural that the symbol of the fertilizing rains should appear on the vessels destined for agricultural sacrifices, but Professor Pelliot raises a doubt as to whether the *lei-wen*

[1] Andersson: *Preliminary Report*, p. 16 and Pl. III.

really did originally represent the "thunder-pattern."[1] However this may be, it is worth while to note the continuity of this motive from prehistoric ages down to the palmy days of the classical period.

Another classic motive is that of the *t'ao-t'ieh*, a monster with a big head and no apparent body, like the *kīrtimukha* of Indian art, or certain monstrous heads of Central America before the time of Columbus.[2] In the Chóu bronzes we shall see how the component parts of the *t'ao-t'ieh* — the eyes in relief like nail-heads, the nose

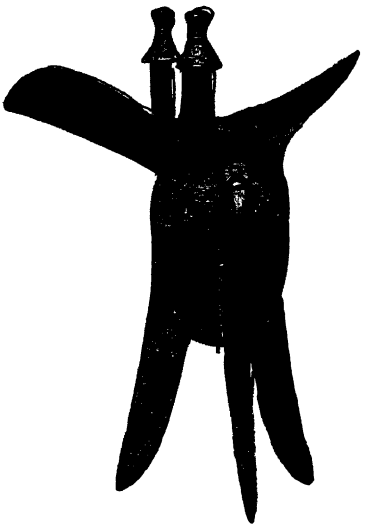


FIGURE 16
Three-footed *chio* (*tsio*).
— *Sumitomo collection*



FIGURE 17
Three-footed *chia* (*kia*).
— *Sumitomo collection*

[1] Professor Pelliot's lecture of February 25, 1929.

[2] See the discussion of this question by Arthur Waley and Perceval Yetts in *Burlington Magazine*, February 1926, p. 104.

in the shape of a ridge running down the middle, and the horns in the form of geometrical spirals — are scattered over the whole surface of the vase, as if the monster was, so to speak, diffused through the material and only seen in brief and fleeting glimpses



FIGURE 18
Chinese bell. Louvre. Pelliot mission.
— *Photo, Louvre, Archives photographiques*



FIGURE 19
Archaic bell.
— *Sumitomo collection*

(Fig. 6, 8, 11, 12, 12 b, 14, 17; and cf. Fig. 55 and 76). No doubt, as M. Charles Vignier remarks, this predilection for what suggests an immanent presence, this deliberate avoidance of concrete realism, are due to a peculiar feeling for nature, of a deeper kind than that expressed in the plastic conventions of the Indo-Mediterranean races.[1]

[1] Charles Vignier, Vol. I (fibulæ, mirrors, and masks) of his work on Chinese bronzes, to be published in Paris by the Pégase publishing house. I desire to acknowledge the

However, while surviving in the same form till the development of Chinese art was complete, the *t'ao-t'ieh*, or diffused monster latent in the heart of things and only allowing his dread presence to be divined or momentarily caught a glimpse of, soon came to share his sway with other and less indeterminate forms, no doubt derived from the same principle. In fact, according to Monsieur Vignier's theories, the tiger and the dragon, the bear and the owl all had their origin in the *t'ao-t'ieh* " either as its direct outcome or by the formation of hybrids between it and other forms." Their individual character emerged, according to Monsieur Vignier, about the fifth century B.C. The dragon, or *k'uei*, which appears sometimes as a dragon with the head of a bird (*k'uei fung*), sometimes as a dragon proper (*k'uei lung*), is a beast with either a squat or an elongated body, a head ending in a snout, spikes on its back, and a serpent's tail (Fig. 10, 12, and 14; cf. Fig. 75). Akin to this general type are the salamanders and serpents (*li* and *k'iu*), the latter of which are represented by " an elongated S lying on its side " — a form perhaps already to be distinguished on the aeneolithic vases.[1]

A number of eminent archæologists have made very meritorious and praiseworthy efforts to trace these various types of monster, especially the *t'ao-t'ieh* and the dragon, to an origin outside China. And since, no doubt, the mythical substratum of the various primitive civilizations was fairly similar everywhere, it is by no means impossible to establish analogies between the different archaic monsters into which the myths of Europe and Asia became crystallized; but such researches seem to us illusory. Why should it be necessary to suppose that Chinese civilization was afflicted with congenital sterility to such an extent that it was never capable of producing original types spontaneously? Why should this civilization, of all others, be con-

full extent of my obligation to M. Vignier for generously allowing me to make use of his manuscript before publication.

[1] Andersson: *An Early Chinese Culture*, Pl. XIV, 1 and 2.

fined to the role of adaptation and assimilation? The theory is that it borrowed everything — subjects, motives, and inspiration — from Chaldea, the Scythian races, or the Huns, or even from the unknown cultures of the region of Canton at the dawn of history: that the Chinese genius alone, which for twenty centuries on end was to reveal such spontaneous power and such a faculty for self-renovation, could work only with borrowed material. Who can fail to see the danger of such assumptions? [1]

Far from seeking the origins of the *t'ao-t'ieh,* the dragon, and similar apparitions outside China, we see in their very character the hall-mark of the Chinese genius. The special contribution of the soul of China during the archaic period — that terrible period of the "leaders" and the "contending states," which appears to us one of the darkest in history — was precisely this: that it translated into terms of art that omnipresent mystery which was always ready to resolve itself into terror. The affinities which suggest themselves between Mexican and Chóu art may, as Monsieur Vignier has remarked, be explained by a similar state of mind, which was the product of similar political conditions (cf. Fig. 23–24). Crushed as both of them were beneath a régime of blood — to understand which we need only re-read the history of the "contending states" and of the beginnings of the Ch'in dynasty, always remembering to discount the toned-down version of Confucian days — when either of these peoples tried to fathom the decrees of fate, they saw nothing but a menacing *t'ao-t'ieh* in the heart of the clouds.

Thus this ever-present menace, this latent terror, was clothed by the artist with no concrete form, or, if he attempted so to clothe it, the visions of which he caught a confused glimpse eluded any realistic treatment. The crushing mystery which overwhelms man when face

[1] May I add, none the less, that, without wholly endorsing the tendencies of this school of critics, I would make no secret of my profound admiration for the ability of its leading representatives.

to face with his destiny survived to the full, and Monsieur Vignier is undoubtedly giving us the very key to archaic Chinese art when he says that " in China the sole object of the artist was, not to represent the real world, but, on the contrary, gradually to bring reality face



FIGURE 20
Bronze with head of a deer in relief.
— *Sumitomo collection*

to face with a world as moving and unstable as the clouds." And though, as we look upon the scattered components of the *t'ao-t'ieh* on the sides of a ritual vase, an animal form seems to take shape, it is really no known beast that the artist has tried to reproduce, for his sole preoccupation has been almost entirely with " creating a haunt-

ing suggestion which should further assume the appearance of an animal" (cf. Fig. 6 and 14).

The Chóu æsthetic canon is entirely dominated by this twofold preoccupation: on the one hand that of suggesting mystery by a certain number of dread apparitions, yet refusing to dispel the terror by reducing them to concrete form; and on the other hand that of rendering in its utmost strength and fullness the horror of Destiny, the awfulness of the sovereign powers beneath which man is crushed and ground down, while not allowing these powers to reveal themselves sufficiently for man to be able to meet them face to face. Mystery and terror: these constitute the whole inspiration of these savage centuries.

For the rendering of such haunting fears one quality alone was necessary, one preoccupation alone predominated: that of force. An accumulated, concentrated force, forcing its superabundance of decorative power into severe contours, and drawing its elegance from within alone — such is Chóu art.

Are its forms heavy? No: for the lines are almost despotically inevitable, being dictated by a vitality of inconceivable vigour, and, as such, subject to rigorous limitations. An unerring geometrical sense — for the Chinese race was already uncompromisingly practical, though intensely impregnated with a sense of mystery — keeps every object strictly within the limits required by its use. Hence in these cauldrons, troughs, and pots the development of planes remains true to the original forms of the type; and nothing could be more moving than this persistence of the humble domestic purpose in combination with a revelation of the earliest mythologies. In vain, from the fifth century onwards, did Confucianism make it its task to replace the legends of archaic days by its moralizing official version. The Chóu vases were to perpetuate in durable forms of bronze the living memory of the anguish and drama of a vanished society.

Thus the forms, being dictated by a domestic or ritual purpose, remained of an impeccable sobriety. But the world of fabulous and

nightmare imagery which haunted the subconscious mind of China had its revenge in the decoration — a decoration as crowded, as wilfully confused, and as swarmingly fertile as the myths which gave rise to it. Moreover, the complication increases progressively. In the early stages — if, that is, the attempts at a comparative classification

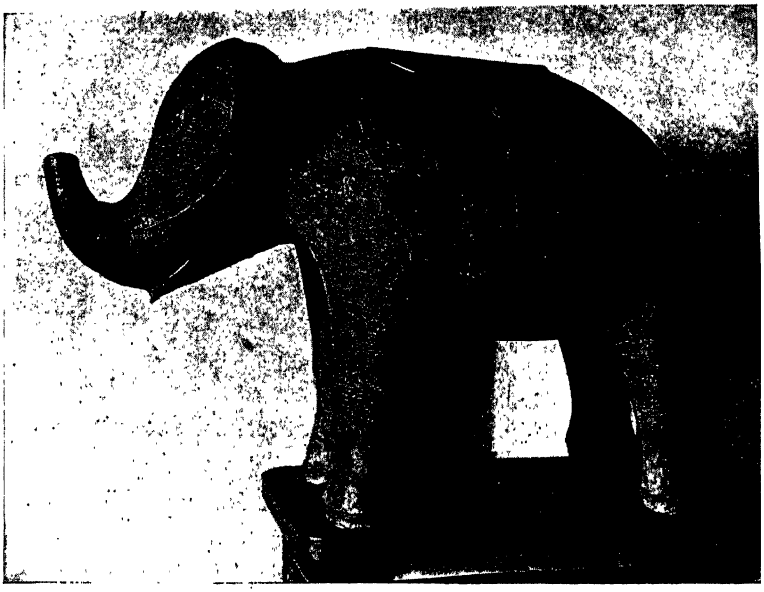


FIGURE 21
Bronze elephant. Camondo collection.
— *Photo, Louvre, Archives photographiques*

are really of any value — the ornamentation still seems to be fairly sober. The general motives, inspired by conventionalized animal forms, which adorn the vase are merely indicated, either by a delicate raised outline, as fine as a thread, or, on the contrary, by an incised line, the background so far remaining plain. But soon the conventionalized animal motives which form the essential feature of the decoration stand out in relief as a whole. The eyes and horns of the

t'ao-t'ieh, though not yet appearing fully in the round, stand out against the background in demi-relief.

The next phase is that full relief triumphs in the heads of the mon-

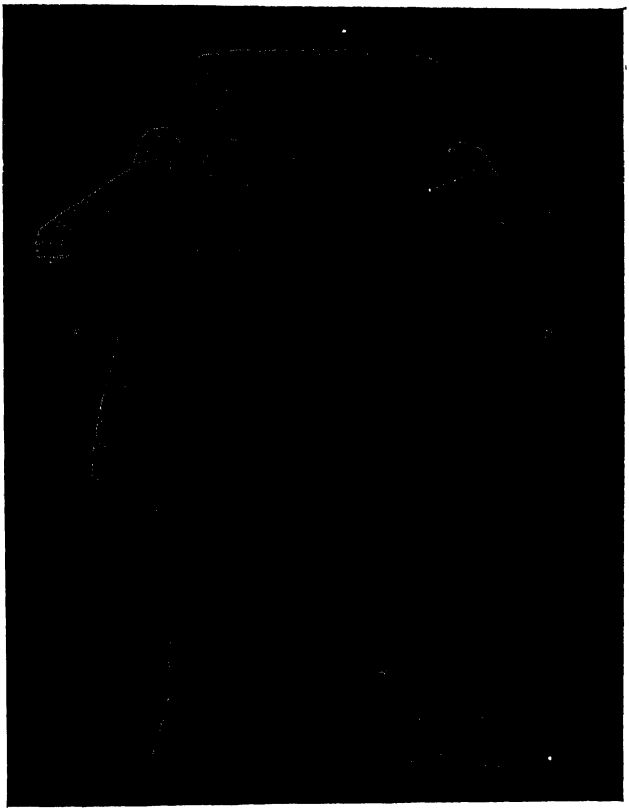
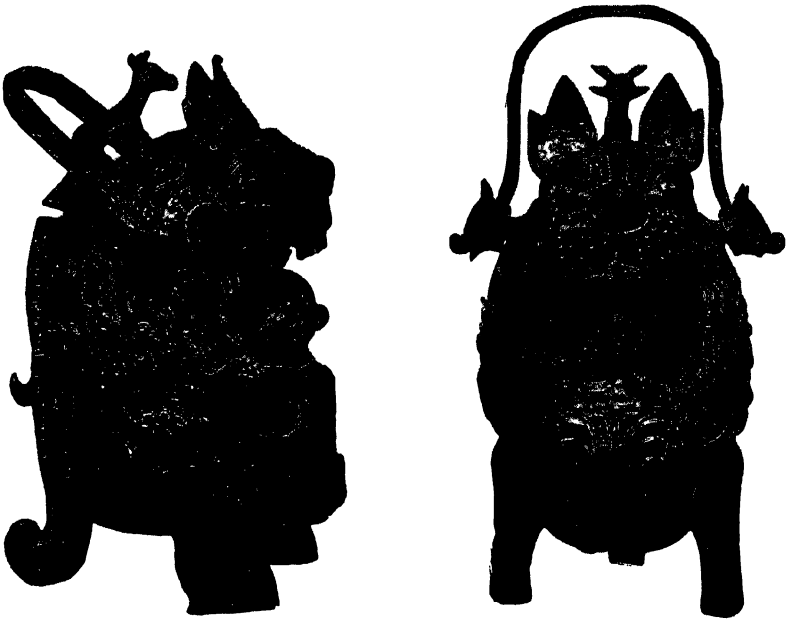


FIGURE 22

Tsun vase formed out of rams.
— *Eumorfopoulos collection*

sters, wild beasts, and rams which stand out at the juncture of the handles or in the middle of the neck of the vases (Fig. 15, 20). The ribs or ridges which define the lines separating the planes are also in relief, thus lending the vases a striking impression of nervous

vigour and architectural strength. Sometimes, even, the whole bronze assumes an animal form — for instance the owls in the Sumitomo and Louvre (Camondo) collections, or the elephant in the Camondo collection (Fig. 21, 22). But never, even in these exceptional instances, does the animal form in any way approximate to a servile representa-



FIGURES 23, 24
Yu in the shape of a monster.
— *Sumitomo collection*

tion. For the rest, it is not so much the form of the animal which is rendered as the sum of the qualities which go to make it up, its energy and reserve of power. The Chóu animals are not mere forms, but forces.

At the same time, in the space left between the projecting motives, part animal and part geometrical, the whole of the background becomes covered with ornamental motives, the most typical of these

being the *lei-wen*, or thunder-pattern — the Greek key-pattern of the Far East, combinations of which, at once labyrinthine and ordered, cover all the unoccupied space left between the principal motives, and even the bodies of the animals whose forms are there suggested. As we look at these patterns, their repetition seems to produce a more

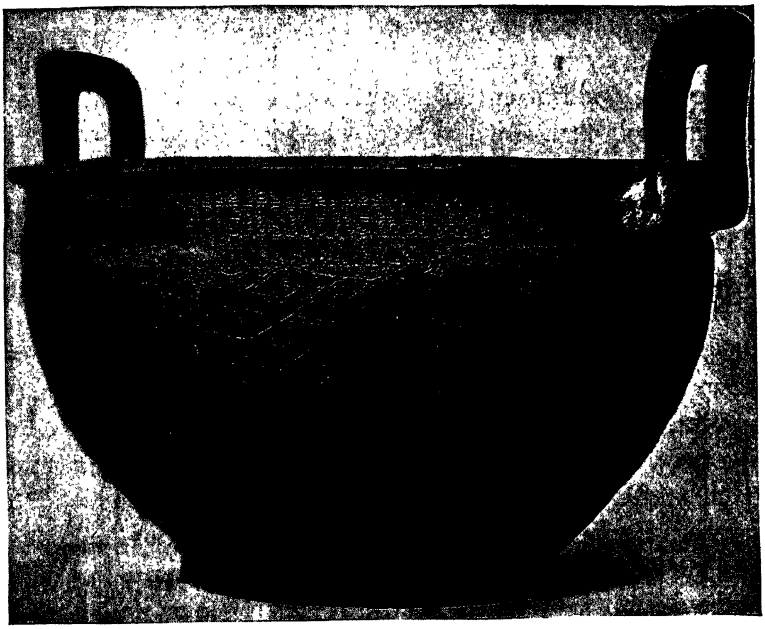


FIGURE 25
Chóu bronze. Vignier collection.
— *Photo, Vignier*

than decorative effect, for they appear to vibrate with a rhythmical power of their own (cf. Fig. 25), so that the whole vase becomes a veritable poem in bronze, consisting in the balanced stresses and rhythms of these forces.

As we look at some *hsien*, *ting*, or *li* of the Sumitomo or Loo collections, such as those which we reproduce here (Fig. 6 and 14), we

may notice how remarkably the elements of the *t'ao-t'ieh*, which seem at first to be, as it were, diffused over the sides of the vase, appear to draw together under the eye into a forceful whole. Once our intelligence has distinguished amid the intricacy of the, to all appearance, purely geometrical elements of the decoration the great hypnotic eyes of the monster, its twisted ram's horns, the mighty ridge of its brow and nose, its flattened snout, and, at times, its grinning fangs, the beast seems positively to spring forth from the bronze, and its presence imposes itself with irresistible insistence; the vase *is* the beast, far more intensely than if it had been definitely in the form of a real animal. To complete the illusion, we have but to look at the dragons which face each other on the neck or lid; their deliberately geometrical character leaves the mind in doubt whether they are saurian or feline in kind — and, as a matter of fact, both the Chinese serpent and the Chinese tiger were to be evolved from this form pregnant with potentialities. But in spite of this indeterminate quality — or perhaps by reason of it — this fantastic beast, too, gallops, writhes, threatens, and imposes itself more fiercely than any known creature. Its geometrical lines partake at once of the undulating movement of the animal form and the zigzag flash of lightning.[1] And as a matter of fact, when it appears in its later forms, in the painting of the Middle Ages, the dragon reveals itself amid the glare of the storm-lit clouds. But the decorative canons of which it is the expression were already in force in the Chóu vases.

And so, too, are all the distinctive features of Chinese art. The same skill in the treatment of masses, the same sureness and vigour in the arrangement of the planes as lend the Chóu vases their architectural quality, will be found again in later ages, in the art of the Han and

[1] Cf. *Eumorfopoulos Collection, Catalogue of the Chinese and Corean Bronzes*, by Perceval Yetts, Pl. XVIII and XLVI, Fig. A 131 and A 132; Sirén: *Histoire des arts anciens de la Chine* (*Early Chinese Arts*), I, Pl. 27 A (Stoclet collection), Pl. 29 (Sumitomo collection), Pl. 63 (David-Weill collection). An English translation of Professor Sirén's work will shortly appear, with the same figures and pagination as the French edition. This work is hereinafter cited as *Early Chinese Arts*.

T'ang dynasties, and even down to the days of Sung ceramics. Again, the Chóu bronzes reveal another enduring principle of the Chinese æsthetic ideal: the intentional indeterminateness of subject which accompanies this precision of line. It is true that the evolution of Chinese art was to have its moments of frank realism, the linear realism of the Han artists and the full-bodied realism of the T'ang school. But such concrete modes of representation marked but a fleeting moment in the process of evolution. At the two extremities of the curve we find, on the one hand, the Chóu *t'ao-t'ieh* diffused about the sides of the vase and projecting itself through this material envelope only gradually, or else in a flash; and on the other hand this same Presence, divined rather than visible in the misty washes of the Sung paintings. In either case are we not faced with something immanent which refuses to clothe itself in concrete form? In the fierce archaic age this may be the mask of a *t'ao-t'ieh*, or later, under the influence of the Mahāyāna system of Buddhism and of Taoism, it may be a pantheistic reverie, but, in spite of all difference of periods, philosophies, and civilizations, it always stands for the same general conception of the world.

This conception is curiously difficult to define in isolation — for the attempt amounts to trying to determine the unknowable — but it reveals its distinctive differentia when we try to compare it with those of other races.

Is it that of Greece? The Zeus of Mylasa, the Aphrodite of Cnidus or of Melos, are but flesh made marble. Or Egypt, with its colossi of the Pharaonic ages imposing the precision of their lines upon us commandingly in the brilliant sunlight? Or India, with the Buddha of Sārnāth, the three-headed Śiva of Elephanta, the Mañjuśrī of Ajaṇṭā, or the tender imaginings of Bōrōbudur? In all of these we have humanity deified and magnified till it reaches the very bounds of the cosmos — witness the Natarāja — but, in spite of all, remaining human.

In China, on the contrary, we have an intentionally indeterminate quality making itself felt, whether in these bronzes, in which an enigmatic *t'ao-t'ieh* emerges only in order to conceal itself the more surely; or in the misty distances of the painter's wash, in which hovers the same vagueness, though expressed by different means. In either of these mediums we have the expression of an element which remains distinctive of the æsthetic ideal of China; for neither Egypt, Chaldea, nor Persia, neither Greece nor India, has anything similar to offer. We have here an ideal of art consisting in mystery expressed in a form that is not concrete, of mystery in its entirety, dreaded or loved for its own sake. After the art of the Mediterranean, of the Near and Middle East, and of India, all of which are essentially so much alike, here, for the first time, we completely abandon the classical canon and leave all anthropomorphism far behind us. We are now approaching an art which, while lacking in plastic or sensuous qualities, succeeds by means of simple geometrical lines — which are indeed "lines of force" — in suggesting and propounding in an abstract form the whole problem of destiny.

THE ARCHAIC JADES

WHATEVER MAY BE THE ORIGIN OF JADE — WHETHER IT WAS IMported from Khotan or produced by China itself — jade objects are found as far back as the prehistoric age of China. Andersson has found jade disks on the aeneolithic sites of Kan-su. During the Chóu period jade objects must have been fairly common. Professor Pelliot, who has made a special study of the question,[1] is, however, very cautious about the precise date of the various works in this medium known in Europe, Japan, and America, and even of that class associated with

[1] *Jades archaïques de la Chine appartenant à C. T. Loo, publiés par M. Pelliot* (Paris: Van Oest, 1925): Professor Pelliot's lecture at the Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, March 28, 1927. And cf. Barthold Laufer: *Archaic Chinese Jades collected in China by A. W. Bahr, now in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago* (New York, 1927).

the Sin-cheng site in Ho-nan. All that can be claimed is that the decoration of these jades is often Chóu in its motives and consists entirely in a groundwork of *lei-wen* or "thunder-pattern," with highly conventionalized dragons which can hardly be distinguished from *lei-wen*.

Nevertheless, it frequently happens that the jade objects have no decoration, their merit being due solely to the beauty of the material, both to the touch and to the eye, and to their purity of form: they are indeed, as the legend of Khotan has it, "crystallized fragments of moonlight." This is true of the *pi*, great flat rings or disks with a hole through the middle, admirable specimens of which are contained in the Gieseler, Cosme, and David-Weill collections. These disks, which, like all archaic jades, would seem to have a ritual significance, appear to have been solar emblems used either in funeral rites or in sacrifices. Another type, the *kuei*, a sort of "jade knife" which once fitted on to an upright handle, is, as Professor Pelliot has shown, a miniature version of the ancient halberds and ax-daggers of the neolithic age, with a ritual significance. We may also mention the *ts'ung*, defined by Professor Sirén [1] as "a hollow tube, cylindrical within, but square without," which seems to have symbolized the four cardinal points, and the *hu*, a schematic approximation to the form of a tiger.

Indeed, among these jades, approximately attributed to the Chóu period, we fairly often meet with objects suggesting an indeterminate or schematic animal form more or less geometrically by means of zigzags of lines of force. This is a valuable criterion for the determination of what we may now be justified in calling the Chóu artistic canon, in whatsoever material this may be expressed. In these figures cut out in jade, as in the motives of the bronzes, the animal forms have scarcely any individual characteristics, being barely indicated by a turn of the head, a coil of the tail, or by folds and cracks at

[1] *Early Chinese Arts*, I, p. 61.

right angles formed by wide parallel striations; yet in them the animal's whole potential energy and full power of impact are summed up with positive violence.[1] It is hard to distinguish the various significations of these jades — whether they stand for dragons, tigers, or birds — but what does it matter? Setting aside all fruitless attempts at definition, these little works of art are eloquent of the dread power of those visions of terror, whether beasts, monsters, or gods, which haunted the Chinese imagination. Here again we have not so much real creatures as embodied menace and power.

THE CH'IN (TS'IN) PERIOD

IN THE ARCHAIC PERIOD CHINA CONSISTED IN THE MAIN OF THE BASINS of the Yellow River and Pei-ho and part of that of the Blue River. In the eighth century it was divided up among a certain number of principalities or kingdoms, governed by a corresponding number of warlike dynasties striving for hegemony amid incessant wars, at once savage and chivalrous in character. The most bellicose of these "contending states" was that of Ch'in, or Ts'in, situated in what is now Si-ngan-fu, in the heart of the modern province of Shen-si, in the north-west of China. Thus situated on the marches of the land, and forced into a daily struggle if it was to hold its own against the Huns (Hsiung-nu) and other nomads of Mongolia, Ch'in became even more inured to warfare by contact with these. Thus in the fourth century B.C.[2] we see the kings of Ch'in modelling their armaments and strategy on those of the hordes of the steppe, and, side by side with the war-chariots which had hitherto constituted the main force of the Chinese armies, creating a cavalry like that of their neighbours the Huns, a considerably more mobile force, which gave them a marked superiority in battle.

[1] Pelliot: *Jades archaïques*, Pl. XXIII and XXIX.

[2] According to Professor Pelliot's lecture of April 25, 1927, they were anticipated in this, at a short interval, by the neighbouring kings of Ch'u, about 300 B.C.

For though the suzerainty of the Chóu dynasty, which still reigned over its little royal domain of Ho-nan, lingered on obscurely till about the middle of the third century B.C. (256), yet, after A.D. 310 the kings of Ch'in exerted a despotic hegemony as much over these shadowy suzerains as over the other feudal monarchs. History may still refer to the years 310–256 under the title of the "Chóu period"; but in reality the Ch'in period had already begun. The solemn act of 221, by which the King of Ch'in, having crushed all his rivals, proclaimed himself sole master of China and first emperor — Shih Huang-ti — merely set the seal of constitutional legality upon a situation already existing *de facto*.

And an amazing personality he was, this Chinese Cæsar who, during the thirty-six years for which he reigned — as king of Ch'in from 246 to 221, and as emperor of all China from 221 to 210 — forged once and for all with his mighty hand Chinese unity and the Chinese State and Empire: a typical superman, whom a Carlyle or a Nietzsche might have placed on the same level as the greatest of their Indo-Germanic or Semitic "heroes." But, overwhelming as was the energy of this unparalleled personality, it would not by itself suffice to explain the extraordinary impress left upon art by the Ch'in period. How is it possible to suppose that so many characteristic works should have fallen within such a brief space of time — for the imperial dynasty of Ch'in only survived its founder for three years? We are therefore compelled to admit, with M. Charles Vignier, that the style known as Ch'in covers not only the brief period of imperial state enjoyed by this house, from 221 to 207, but also its long royal hegemony in the north-west, which started in the last years of the fourth century before our era.

What, then, does Ch'in stand for historically? For the strength of the China of Chóu days, collected, concentrated, and raised to its highest power by the most dynamic of its elements. Under this predatory dynasty the whole story of unbridled violence, cunning, and

assassination absolutely out-herods Herod. And, similarly, what does Ch'in art stand for from the æsthetic point of view? — or, rather, the art generally attributed to the Ch'in period, for it is only honest to admit that we have no inscriptions or dates to serve as a check on our attributions. To borrow M. Charles Vignier's happy phrase, it stands for a flamboyant Chóu style of paroxysmal violence — a "seismic style." It has the same multiplicity and superabundance of motives as the Chóu style, but "with a constant derangement and upsetting of the planes, and a higher degree of intricacy in the subjects."

Does this definition apply, as Professor Sirén considers it does, to the objects found by the Swedish engineer Karlbeck near Shu-chou in the valley of the Huai-ho in Ngan-hui, a region which between 248 and 221 B.C. was the centre of the ancient kingdom of Ch'u, the unsuccessful rival of the kingdom of Ch'in? These consist of fragments of vases, scabbard-mounts, hinges, and ornaments, with a decoration consisting of a whirl of spirals, volutes, clouds, and intricate conventionalized foliage, from which spring claws and scales. These objects, many of which have been acquired by the Countess Hallwyl, have been discussed by Professor Sirén in the catalogue of his former collection.[1] But Monsieur Vignier wonders whether the finds in the Huai region ought not to be assigned to a more recent date, the "neo-Ch'in," typical of the period immediately succeeding the Han. However that may be, good specimens of the Ch'in style are to be found in a number of objects in the European collections — for instance, the lock with two bolts in the David-Weill collection, which has often been reproduced, and the equally famous gold sabre-guard in the Eumorfopoulos collection.[2] On these too we see the same wealth of spirals, "thunder-patterns," labyrinthine or ribbon motives, sometimes finishing in lance-heads or points, tongues or claws, a whole

[1] *Documents d'art chinois de la collection Osvald Sirén; Ars Asiatica*, VII, Nos. 30–57.
[2] Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, I, Pl. 92.

assemblage of plaited patterns, Greek frets developing into conventionalized foliage, and tangled intricacies like those of seaweed, all mingled in a confusion full of intense animation and extraordinary liberty of movement.

These geometrical motives are drawn directly from the Chóu repertoire, but are in various respects distinct from it. In the first

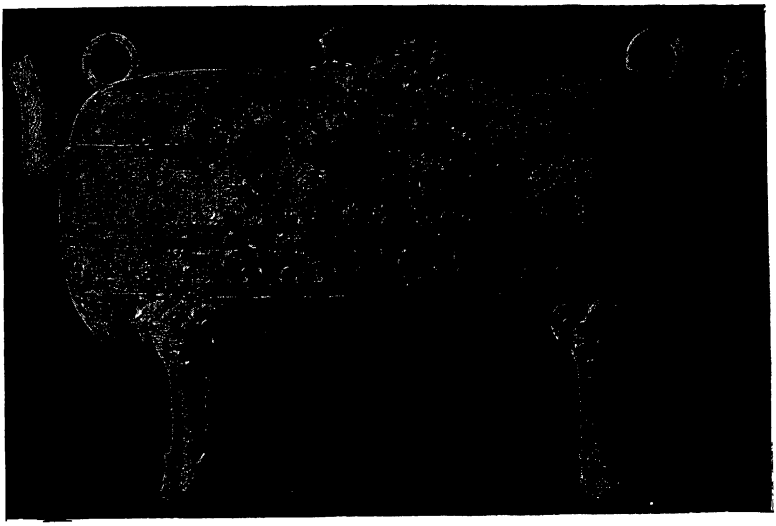


FIGURE 26

Tui with decoration of rams. Style of the Huai region.
— *Wannieck collection*

place, these ornaments are much more overloaded and elaborate in the Ch'in than in the Chóu style: where, for instance, we find a double line in the Chóu style, in the Ch'in the space between the two grooves is decorated with striations at an angle with the principal lines, so that, as Professor Pelliot points out, not a single portion of the bronze is now left plain. On the other hand, in accordance with the comment of Monsieur Vignier quoted above, this Ch'in exuberance is unsymmetrical in its tendencies, and resorts to a constant dislocation of

axis and of plane. Lastly, though Ch'in ornament, like the Chóu, is typically geometrical, it differs from the latter in being more rounded, and this principle is carried out consistently, not only in the

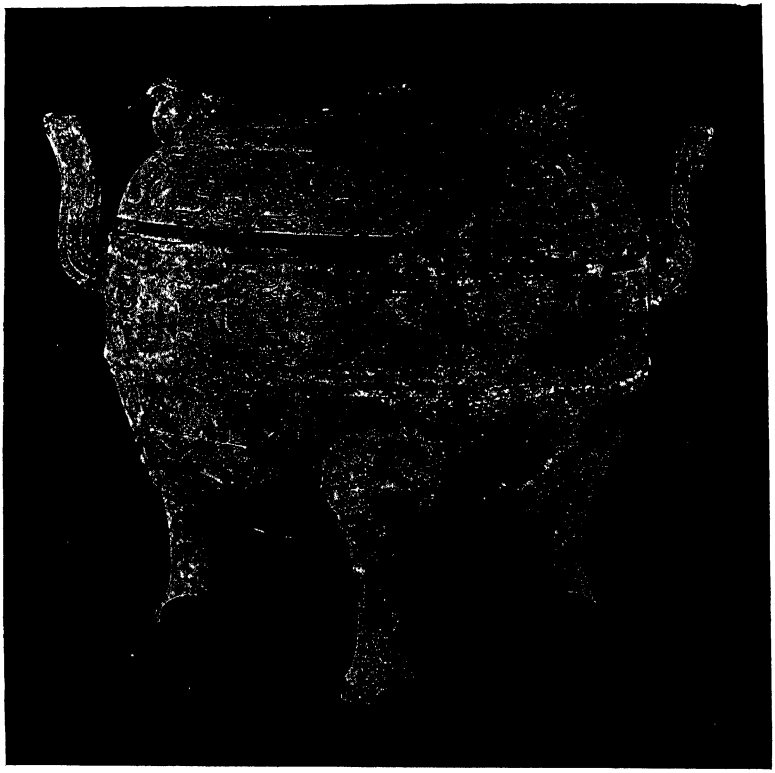


FIGURE 27

Ting with decoration of birds. Style of the Huai region.
— *Wannieck collection*

contour, but in the balance of masses: " In what is known as Ch'in art the clear-cut ridges of Chóu art display a curious tendency to become rounded." [1]

[1] Professor Pelliot's lecture of April 25, 1927. We may compare four Ch'in jades in the same style in the Becker and Newman collections and the Hardt collection, repro-

With this Ch'in art have been associated the bronzes discovered in Huang-shan, near Li-yu, in the north-east of Shan-si, and brought together in the Wannieck collection (Fig. 26, 27, 28). And, as a matter of fact, most of these bronzes display the intricacy of ornament

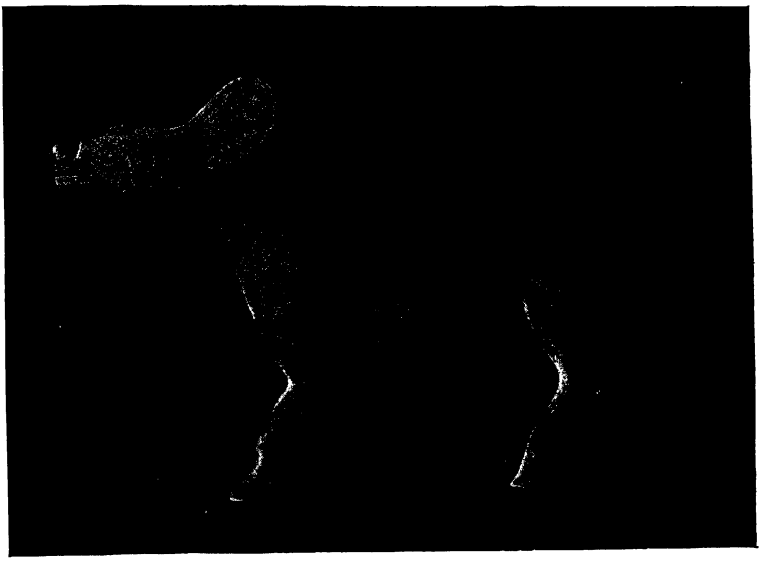


FIGURE 28

Bronze in the shape of an animal. Style of the Huai region.
— *H. Openheim collection. Photo, Wannieck*

proper to Ch'in art. Most of them bear witness to the flamboyant style characteristic of the period, though perhaps the unsymmetrical tendency referred to above appears in them to a lesser extent. On the other hand, the animals in full relief which adorn the top or sides seem to go beyond the ordinary conventions of Ch'in art. Perhaps,

duced by M. Charles Vignier in his second article on the Chinese Exhibition in Berlin of 1929 ("*L'Exposition chinoise de Berlin*"), in *Cahiers d'art*, Year 4, No. 5, Pl. III. Another example of the "whirling vibrance" which is the distinguishing mark of Ch'in ornament is to be found in the bronze *tui* vase in the Eumorfopoulos collection, Nos. XXXVI–XXXVII, *a* 48 and 49, of the Yetts catalogue.

as Monsieur Vignier suggests, we may be justified in seeing in them a traditional stage between the Ch'in canon of art and the beginning of the Han — though this reservation in no way detracts from the intense interest and beauty of these works.

THE HAN PERIOD: BRONZES, MIRRORS, AND JADES

THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY SHIH HUANG-TI, THE CH'IN HERO, had been revolutionary and levelling in its character. In the "burning of the books," the abolition of feudalism, the suppression of fiefs, and the clean sweep which he made of the past in order to construct the Chinese military State, he no doubt went too fast and too far, so that a reaction was bound to take place. It broke out on the very morrow of his death, and in 207 swept away his family. After a few years of civil war a new house, the great Han dynasty, restored Chinese unity. It governed China for four centuries, from 202 B.C. to the year 8 of our era, and then again, after the brief domination of a usurper, from A.D. 25 to 220.

Taught by experience, the Han sovereigns avoided the brutal precipitation of those of Ch'in, whose work they carried a stage further, but with greater moderation, for which reason they completed it successfully. Thus their government presented certain apparently contradictory features. From one point of view it may be interpreted as a reaction from the thoroughgoing centralization and absolutism of Ch'in. They restored the Confucian "books," which had been burnt by the Ch'in ruler Shih Huang-ti, to a position of honour; and they even seemed to restore feudalism. The fact is that the unification and centralization of the empire, which under Shih Huang-ti had been no more than an improvised measure due to a superman of genius, became a reality under the patient administration of the Han rulers. Under cover of an apparent concession to the reaction against the rash improvisations of the Ch'in monarchs, the Han dynasty

patiently and surely brought about the triumph of the former's whole program. Such a Han emperor as Wu-ti (140–87 B.C.) showed himself a faithful follower of the Ch'in ruler Shih Huang-ti. Further, while the Ch'in monarchs had confined their ambition to the unification of China against the outside world, contenting themselves, in the matter of foreign policy, with checking the incursions of the Huns by building the Great Wall, the Han rulers turned the power of China against the outside world and started an extensive policy of expansion across central Asia which was to bring China into contact with the Iranian and Buddhist worlds. We have described this epic period in detail elsewhere.[1] It may suffice here to recall the cavalry raids which, under the Han emperor Wu-ti, carried the Chinese generals Ho Ch'ü-ping and Li Kuang-li as far as Ferghāna, on the threshold of Iran and India (121–102). Subsequently, under the Later Han dynasty, from 73 to 97 of our era, a yet more famous Chinese conqueror, Pan Ch'ao, crushed the Huns, subjugated the oases of the Gobi desert, which had hitherto been for the most part Indo-European, and in his turn reached the Pamirs. Even as recounted in the sober narrative of the Annals of the Han dynasty, this whole story has an epic swing. The Chinese squadrons, formed in the school of the Huns, were on their way towards the conquest of Asia.

The development of Chinese art is a faithful reflection of this twofold historic character.

On the one hand, after the exuberance of Ch'in art, the Han artistic canon is marked by a striking severity and austerity. Han simplicity, to quote M. Charles Vignier, is in contrast, not only with Ch'in flamboyance, but also with Chóu complexity. "This extreme simplification of style reduces all decoration to a single plane, and all motives to a simple graphic or linear style." These characteristics are to be noted in particular in the bronze vases and mirrors.

[1] R. Grousset: *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient*, I, 210–19.

On the other hand, for the first time, so far as we are aware, sculpture in the round emancipated itself and, separating itself from the lids, handles, or bodies of vases, insisted upon being treated as a thing apart. Realism made its appearance, and, in particular, realism in the representation of animals, in both the terracottas and the reliefs found in the funeral chambers. The mythological motives latent upon the sides of the bronzes escaped in fantastic relief on to the walls of the Shan-tung tombs or climbed freely over the columns of Ssŭ-ch'uan. This realism was none the less subject to the limitations of the linear style, classicism, and strict order which govern all Han compositions, and for this reason remained all movement and liberty, with little or nothing, as yet, of the muscular fullness which was to characterize the more solid realism of the T'ang period.

One of the best definitions of the Han canon of art — a definition in keeping with the above ideas — has been given by Professor Georges Salles, curator of the Chinese department of the Louvre, apropos of a bronze plaque recently acquired by the Louvre, on which the "Han gnome," with which we shall become familiar on the Shan-tung reliefs, is dancing inside a motive formed by the rich sweep of a demi-spiral. "The dance of this figure," writes Monsieur Salles,[1] "seems to express the spirit which animates every part of the decoration. It is all movement; these curved, elongated, rushing forms are knit together and carried away by one and the same impulse. The very symmetry of the design, since it is not over-rigorously applied, enlivens the rhythm of the whole without hampering it, imparting to it, not rigidity, but animation, as though it were the twofold and simultaneous effect of a single impulse. This living quality is the distinguishing feature of the Han style. The line traced in the metal is nervous, clear-cut, and impetuous. Its impact is swift and sudden. If it bends, this is only that it may leap back again with the impetus of lightning. It thus creates a light and dancing world in

[1] Georges Salles, in *Bulletin des Musées de France*, November 11, 1929.

which unreal beings mingle with living creatures, all being united by the extraordinary exultation which transports them as a whole."

The first characteristic of Han art, a simplicity sometimes carried to the point of bareness, a purely graphic linear outline, and a strict simplicity of decoration, appears in the mirrors as clearly as could be desired: no contrast could be more striking than that which can be seen between the decoration of a Han mirror and of a Chóu bronze. At times one might think one was dealing with the artistic canons of two people of diametrically opposite temperaments.

A geometrical simplicity asserts itself in the different types of mirror. The borders surrounding the central boss are arranged in regular concentric zones, with subjects of a quiet and logically ordered kind. First of all comes the ornament known as the " nipples " or " breasts," the number of which varies from eight to forty, the latter being known in Chinese art jargon as " the hundred nipples " (Fig. 29). It appears that these are really representations of the stars, the central boss in the middle of the successive concentric zones possibly symbolizing the Island of the Immortals. However that may be, these mirrors have a finely ordered plan and a quiet elegance which are pleasing to our innate classicism. Round the central boss, in the inner island which sets it off, are two successive circles of eight and six " nipples "; next, after a plain band, comes a first circle adorned with scallops, or segments of circles, or wave-patterns, sixteen in number, turned inwards; next, after a hatched moulding separating the bands, comes a broad circular zone with an elegant decorative motive consisting of four " nipples," each surrounded by a garland of eight flat bosses, so arranged that each set forms a floral motive; these motives are surrounded and connected by pliant flowering stems bearing large bosses at intervals, singly or in pairs; last of all, after a plain band, comes the outer edge of the mirror, adorned with the wide scallops mentioned above.

Another fairly frequent type of Han mirror is that of the " eight bows " (Fig. 30). After the central boss, resting upon four petals and two concentric rings, either smooth or corded, comes a scalloped ring enclosing a boldly marked octagonal star. Next come some rings



FIGURE 29
Mirror "of the hundred nipples."
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot donation. Photo, Pivot*

of parallel bands and hatched mouldings, or bands of characters, and then the wide, plain border.

A third type, somewhat different, but equally " constructive (*construit*) " and rigidly symmetrical, is known as that of the " swallow's

wings" (Fig. 31). In the centre is a large boss, enclosed within a solid square whose outer line is adorned with "signs of fortune" in large characters. On the border are the usual sixteen scallops turned



FIGURE 30
Mirror "of the eight bows."
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot donation. Photo, Pivot*

towards the centre. Regarded from the opposite point of view, these scallops form a radiating star with sixteen points; at each angle of the square inscribed within the star is a branch with three leaves, separated by a raised line of rare elegance; and between these conven-

tionalized vegetable forms are eight motives, also geometrical, in the form of wings, in which we may see the design of a swallow skimming past at full speed with drooping wings. After the restful classicism of the "nipple," or "bow" mirrors, the whole effect has a keenly vibrant quality suggesting the wing-cases of certain beetles, or the fringed geometrical forms of certain radiolaria.

We may also mention the decorative arrangement known as the "TLV style." The typical form of this is found on those mirrors on

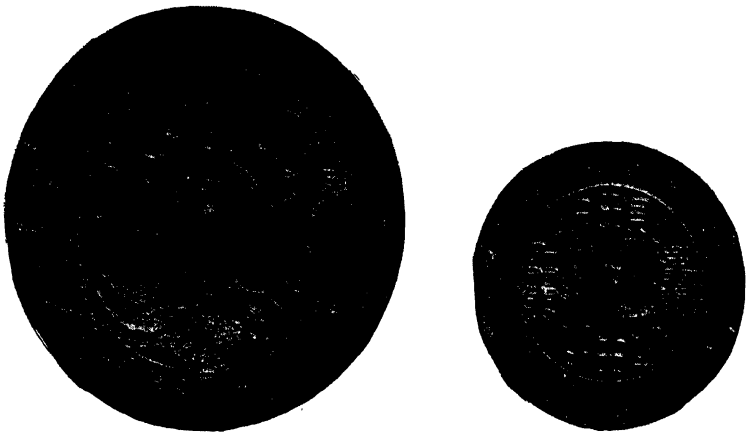


FIGURE 31
Mirror "of the wings" (right hand).
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot donation. Photo, Laniepce*

which, after the central boss enclosed within a square adorned with "nipple" motives and characters, the principal part of the field, usually adorned with "nipple" motives and conventionalized animals (to which we shall return below), is punctuated at regular intervals by a linear design forming the Roman letter T, L, or V, as the case may be. Next in order as we approach the edge follow concentric bands adorned with striations or hatchings, then a broad dog-toothed pattern, and lastly double spiral lines forming a design of scrolls.

The animals which appear upon the main field of these mirrors are as a rule those symbolizing the four points of the compass: the green dragon of the east, the white tiger of the west, the red bird of the south, and the black tortoise of the north.[1] We have here highly conventionalized forms, in the shape of volutes and spirals, a fact which distinguishes them at first sight from the angular dragons of Chóu decoration — not to speak of their linear outline. On certain mirrors, such as the two very fine ones in the David-Weill collection reproduced by Professor Sirén,[2] the design of these animal forms is closely akin to those on the tombstones of Shan-tung, of which we shall speak below. In fact, in spite of the geometrical simplicity of the earliest Han mirrors, towards the end of the period and at the beginning of that of the Six Dynasties we shall see models appearing on which the decoration is almost entirely composed of figures in bold relief, who even depart from the linear outlines of the Han style and assume fuller proportions, forming a transition to the realism of T'ang work. The Taoist character of these mirrors is hardly surprising when we remember the important part played by neo-Taoism, and the spiritualism by which it was accompanied, in the revolt of the " Yellow Caps " and the wars of the Three Kingdoms.

The same process of evolution can be followed on the bronze vases, plates, and drums of the Han period.

The Han bronze vases are distinguished as a rule by a simplicity of ornament which sometimes verges on bareness (Fig. 13 b). We may note, however, that this rule is by no means universal. Not only did the artists of the Han period refrain from abandoning earlier models, but, since the Han kings affected, at least in theory, to stand for a restoration of Chóu traditionalism after the upheavals of the

[1] These cosmogonic symbols were discussed by Professor Pelliot in his lecture of May 9, 1927.

[2] Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 65 B and 66 A.

Ch'in period, their bronzists continued to turn out works in the Chóu style — as was, indeed, done in later ages too, till well on into the Middle Ages. In so far as the Han masters introduced innovations,



FIGURE 32

Bronze *hu*. Han period.
— *Marquis Hosokawa's collection.*
Photo, C. T. Loo

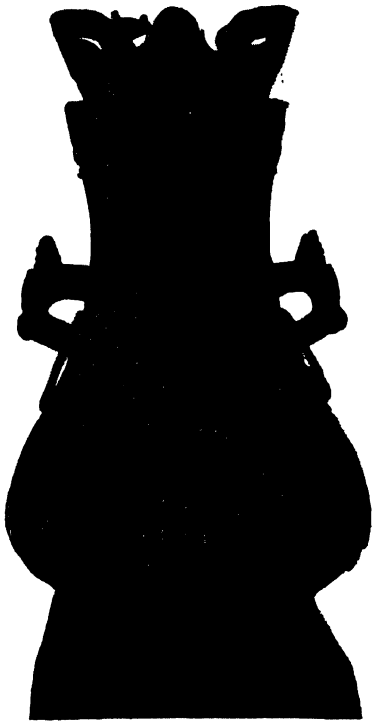


FIGURE 32b

Bronze *hu*. Han period.
— *Charles Vignier collection.*
Photo, Vignier

however, these were in the direction of a simple linear outline, both on the vases and plates and on the mirrors. The *ting* tripods and the elegant *hu* amphoras of the Han period in the Vignier, Eumorfopoulos,[1] Sumitomo, Burchard, and Wannieck collections, or in the

[1] P. Yetts: *Eumorfopoulos Collection: Chinese and Corean Bronzes*, which contains

Stockholm Museum, often have no decoration but a few broad ribbed bands or a few very simple rings at the base of the neck or round the body, the whole elegance of the vase consisting in the sobriety and purity of its forms. In our opinion, there is no need to assume any Hellenistic inspiration, as has been done. The simplification which triumphs here was in keeping with one of the inner laws of the Han æsthetic ideal and was in harmony with all we have seen of its manifestations.

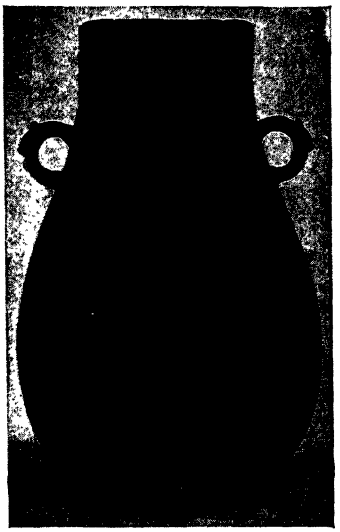


FIGURE 33
Hu vase. Han period.
— *Rutherston collection.*
Photo, Rutherston

A similar tendency led the artist, when the vase was decorated with geometrical, vegetable, or animal motives, to replace the heavy ornament in strong relief of the Chóu school by motives in broad, flat bands in very low relief. Like the linear outline, and for the same reason, this decoration in flat bands is one of the predominant laws of the Han canon of art. As an eloquent illustration of this rule we reproduce three characteristic vases, the first of which belongs to the Charles Vignier collection, of which it is one of the gems, the second to the Marquis Hosokawa's collection, and the third to the Rutherston collection (Fig. 32–33). A comparison of these three vases, first with one another and then with the Chóu bronzes, is the best possible lesson on the direction in which Chinese art was evolving about the beginning of our era. The lid of the Han vase in the Rivière collection (Fig. 34) illustrates the same law of

fine specimens of Han simplicity and symmetry, Pl. XXIV, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, LII, LIII.

flat decoration, applied, in this instance, to an elegant motive of dragons among conventionalized foliage.

Sometimes, while losing none of the simplicity of their prevailingly geometrical decoration, these bronze vases show us representations

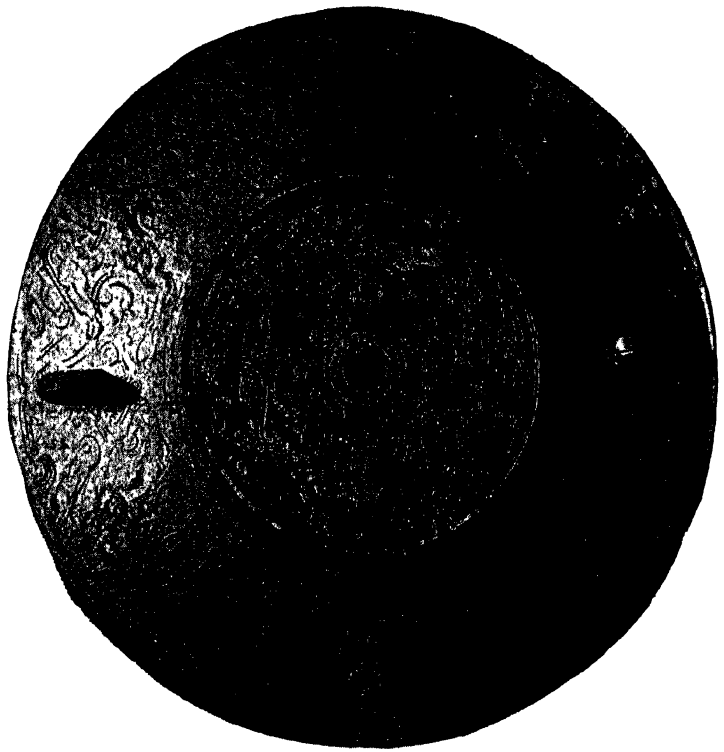


FIGURE 34
Vase-lid. Han period.
— *Henri Rivière collection. Photo, Laniepce*

of human and animal forms of quite a different character in association with it. This is true of the little *hu* wine-vessel, a patinated bronze, in the J. Stonborough collection,[1] with its two friezes, one on

[1] O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin, 1929, Catalogue No. 34.

the sloping shoulder, the other on the body of the vase, the former representing a leopard-hunt, the latter a buffalo-hunt. Whereas the decoration of the neck and foot shows a simplicity in strict conformity with the Han ideal of symmetry and simplicity of ornament, the two hunting-scenes display an amazingly spirited sense of movement. The charge of the buffalo at bay, wounded in the shoulder by a hunting-spear, and turning desperately upon the huntsmen who surround it, has the dashing movement of the bull-fights of Vaphio. But it is characteristic of Han work that here the relief is absolutely flat, the figures being apparently "reserved" by hollowing out the groundwork. The same is true of the vase in the David-Weill collection,[1] representing, on the upper part, nude figures of male and female hunters of a slender elegance, wearing a trident-shaped headdress or arrangement of the hair on top of the head, who are stabbing a sort of fantastic leopard with their arrows or hunting-spears; while on the lower part are mythological beings alternating with dragons and birds,[2] in which we are verging on the mythological reliefs of Shan-tung.

The Han "fibulæ," originally intended to serve as hooks for cloaks, buckles for girdles or garments of some kind or other, provide excellent examples of this school of art. From the point of view of form they may be classified under certain general types:[3] open-work fibulæ[4] formed either of a very much conventionalized dragon, coiled in the shape of an S, or else of two S-shaped dragons, as a rule sym-

There is a good reproduction in M. Charles Vignier's second article on this exhibition, "*L'Exposition de Berlin*," in *Cahiers d'art*, Year 4, No. 5, Pl. I.

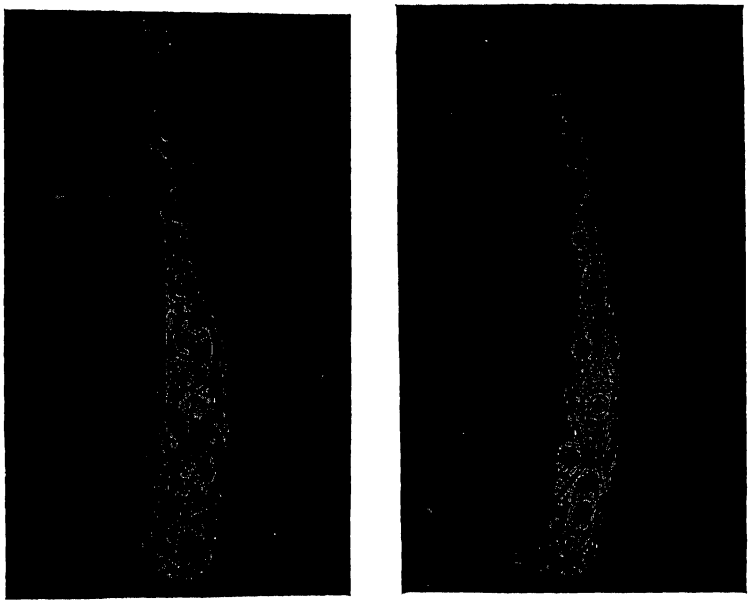
[1] Reproduced in M. Vignier's article quoted above.

[2] This may be compared with the *hu* in the Stoclet collection, with bands representing a leopard-hunt, a bull-hunt, and birds, reproduced in O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin, 1929, Catalogue No. 35, p. 41. There are also hunting-scenes in the same style hollowed out on a great bronze basin in the Freer Gallery, Washington, the inlay of which has disappeared. Cf. Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 43.

[3] There are good plates giving representative illustrations of these various types in Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 7–14.

[4] I continue to call them by this name, which has become customary.

metrically intertwined like the curving stems of conventionalized foliage; solid fibulæ, formed of a long plate of metal, the body of which is generally decorated with a motive of intertwining dragons, treated in a bevelled demi-relief, and, here again, more or less assimilated to foliage, with which goes a clasp in which the hook is a



FIGURES 35, 36
Han fibulæ.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot and Langweil donations*

serpent's head quite simply and indeed rather vaguely indicated (Fig. 35, 36); there are yet other solid fibulæ with a rounded body representing the head of a bear or some feline beast, or the mask of a *t'ao-t'ieh;* or long fibulæ with a grooved handle mounted on the mask of a *t'ao-t'ieh* or in the form of a heraldic bird; or long fibulæ of definitely animal shape, such as the marvellous one from the Koechlin collection which we reproduce here (Fig. 37), representing a serpent

with little wings, coiled in the shape of a figure 8 — a bronze of which the movement, lifelike writhing, and spontaneous vigour foreshadow the realistic treatment of animals under the Six Dynasties and the T'ang school, but with an added elegance (cf. Fig. 38).

Inlaid decoration is subject to the same laws as hold good for Han bronzes as a whole. There are, indeed, a number of Han bronzes in our collections, whether vases or fibulæ, which are, or were, decorated with gold and silver; but the precious metals are always laid on in "flat silhouette" with no depth, or in still narrower lines. We can observe this from the vases or fibulæ on which the inlay has disappeared, leaving a blank in the place once occupied by the precious metals.

The Han fibulæ inlaid with turquoise, gold, or silver are generally found "with an elongated body, curved a little backwards like the handle of a spoon," and usually divided longitudinally into three planes by two ridges running down the middle. The decoration, as can be seen from the two fibulæ in the Musée Guimet (Salle Pelliot) which we reproduce here (Fig. 35–36), has the usual geometrical character of the Han style, with its elegant clarity and rigorous symmetry. Thus we find the well-known association of lozenges, triangles, and spirals with conventionalized

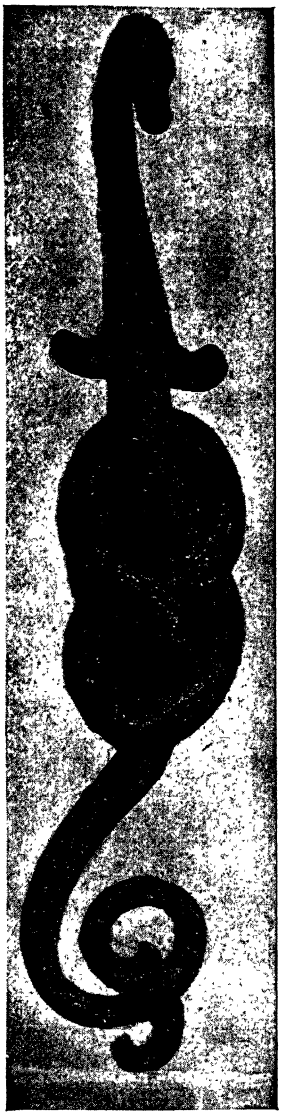


FIGURE 37
Han fibula.
— *Koechlin collection*

foliage from which spring curling tendrils. What we cannot reproduce is the charming play of the blue tones of the turquoise and the finely inlaid gold on the patinated background of antique bronze.



FIGURE 38
Bronze ring. Han period.
— *David-Weill collection. By courtesy of Mr. David-Weill*

On the inlaid metal vases the decoration, whether animal or vegetable in character, maintains the same rigid symmetry, the same rather cold elegance and intentional sobriety, almost amounting to bareness, which are typical of Han decoration as a whole. This rigidly ordered arrangement, this strict classicism, are shown on the

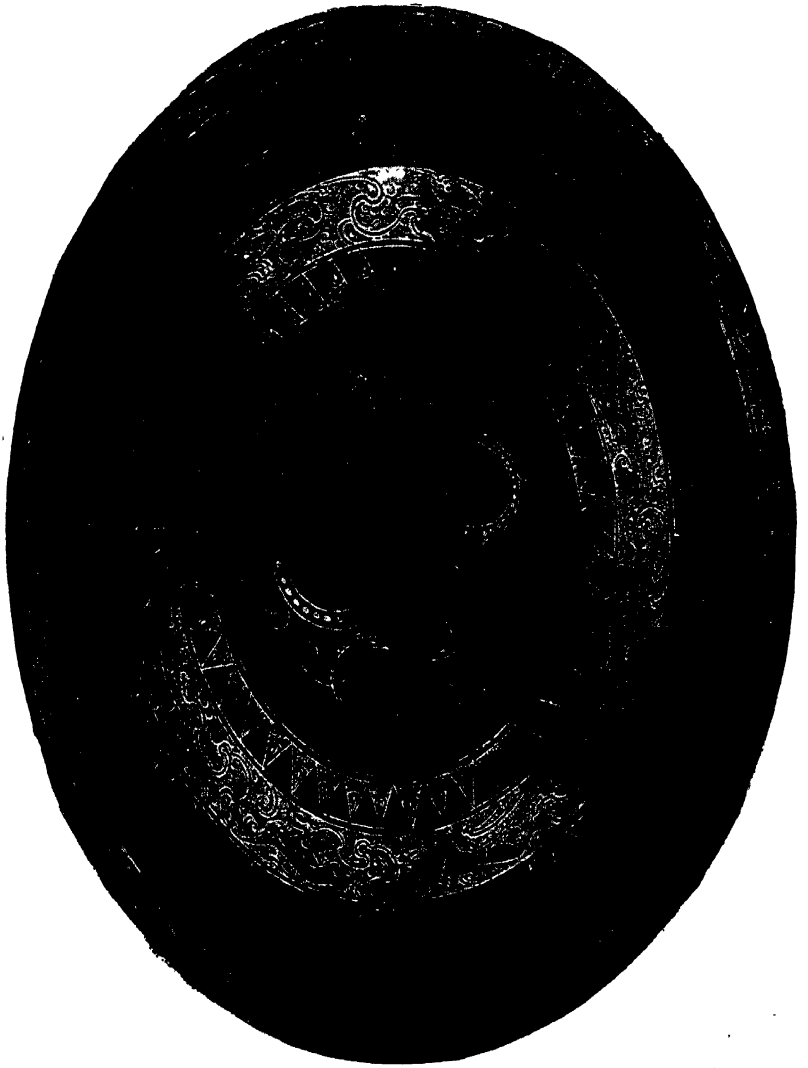


FIGURE 39

Bronze platter. Han period.
— *Marquis Hosokawa's collection. Photo, C. T. Loo*

great round dish in the Marquis Hosokawa's collection, which we are enabled to reproduce here by courtesy of the owner and by the kindness of Monsieur C. T. Loo (Fig. 39).[1] As on the mirrors of the same period, the general disposition of the round surface consists of broad concentric bands decorated with spirals and lozenges, followed by others with a dog-toothed design. But in the centre of the outside face a marvellous dragon coils the spirals of his ocellated body in a pose full of vibrant suppleness: we have only to set this striking apparition, at once naturalistic in style, in accordance with the new tendency, and idealized in accordance with the old, beside the Chóu dragons to realize the distance which henceforward separates us from the Chóu canons, expressed entirely in "lines of force." The Chóu monsters (Fig. 14) were potential energies, charged with a threatening force. The dragon on the Hosokawa basin is a force let loose, for which very reason, while observing the ordered arrangement, simplicity, and clarity of the Han style, its movement possesses a rare elegance. The same qualities assert themselves in the animal figures forming the decoration of the principal band on each side of the plate: springing tigers whose long bodies are hurled through the air with a resilience which displays close observation and a remarkable elegance; a bear, attacked by one of them, lies on its back propping its spine against the ground and opens its paws to crush it; beyond this a sort of cobra darts like a cracked whip at an amazingly decorative phœnix. On other parts of the dish are fantastic creatures animated by the same movement, just as we shall see them on the funeral reliefs of Shan-tung: a beast of the feline tribe with a human head, dragons as sinuous as tigers or bounding like antelopes, or a feathered human genius. The whole is represented in the simple linear outline to which M. Charles Vignier has drawn attention, which is saved from any muscular heaviness by the fact that it confines the world

[1] Cf. Rostovzev: *Inlaid Bronzes of the Han Dynasty in the Collection of C. T. Loo* (Paris, 1927); Otto Fischer: *Chinesische Malerei der Han-Dynastie*, Pl. 28–31.

to two dimensions and thus lends the figures represented a directness of movement which is absolutely that of the clouds which swirl round them.

Thus we are led to a fresh idea concerning the Han æsthetic ideal. Just as the art of the Chóu period expressed sheer force by very reason of its concentration, so Han art, by very reason of its emancipation and simplicity of line, is, when necessary, an art of pure movement. We shall see later how the combination of these two principles was afterwards to produce the realism of the T'ang period.

This definition can be verified by reference to the jades, as well as to ceramic decoration and the sculptured reliefs.

There are, in fact, a number of categories of jade objects attributed to the Han dynasty, in which we note the same characteristics as in the bronzes of the same period. The jade rings, or *pi*, of the Later Han period often remind us of the mirrors of which we have already given some idea. This is notably so of the *ku-pi*, or " disks with a granulated decoration " or " design," so strikingly represented in the Gieseler and Loo collections, as well as in the Seoul Museum: the principle is that of the mirrors of the " hundred nipples." [1] Often, too, the decoration of the *pi* consists of a first granulated band surrounded by an outer band adorned with branching serpent motives or conventionalized foliage with dragons and hydras, these latter subjects being elaborated with the rigorous symmetry and rather cold clarity of the Han style as a whole.[2]

At other times the Han granulated jades appear in the form of cut-out shapes suggesting the tiger (*hu*) — but these tigers are as yet anything but realistic, being, on the contrary, highly conventionalized in design — a purely decorative and schematic form. In spite of the floral adornments casually growing out of them, and the coiling terminal motives, the sinuosities of the feline beast, instead

[1] Pelliot: *Jades archaïques*, Pl. XIII. [2] Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 88.

of being multiplied to infinity, in the old Chóu manner, are traced in great simple lines of a rigorous symmetry. The Han characteristics assert themselves in these objects all the more clearly because these plates of jade, being perfectly flat and possessing no depth, are essentially suited to the instinctive taste of that age for purity of line — witness certain jade *hu* in the Gieseler collection.

Thus Han simplification tends to emancipate the forms of dragon, feline beast, or bird from their material trammels and to lend them freedom and individual character. And so we come to the dragon forming the handle of the famous ritual ax in the Eumorfopoulos collection.[1] This is indeed a typical piece of work. The long, undulating body of the animal, with the supple arching spine, the writhing movement of the front part of the body, the threatening turn of the head, the long, thrashing tail, are so many traits which reveal the amazing sense of movement of the Han artists, a movement all the more rapid, we repeat once more, because here we still have a simple outline with no sense of thickness; and this very rapidity of movement, combined with the persistence of a decorative conventionalization, succeeds in producing an ornamental effect of wondrous elegance — note, for instance, the use made of the rhythm of the horn, the little wing, and the triple ridge on the coiling tail in bringing the whole design together. This same elegance, produced by simplicity and swiftness of line, is also found in the semicircular curves and lines of speed of the jade fish (*huang-yu*) in the Gieseler and Loo collections.[2] Even after a realistic treatment of animals had made its appearance, as, for instance, in the famous jade plaque, this time representing a real tiger (*hu*), in the Gieseler collection,[3] or the charming little head of a hind in the Koechlin collection,[4] this realism

[1] Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 92.

[2] See B. Laufer: *Jade* (1912); Dame Una Pope-Hennessy: *Early Chinese Jades* (1923); P. Pelliot: *Jades archaïques de Chine, Collection Loo* (1925).

[3] Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 90.

[4] A jade classed as belonging to the Han period by M. Vignier, "*L'Exposition d'art chinois de Berlin*," II, in *Cahiers d'art*, Year 4, No. 5, Pl. III.

was still distinguished by flawless elegance, simply by reason of its preference for a purely linear outline, its simplicity and swiftness of contour, its softness, and, if such a term is permissible, its candour of design.

HAN CERAMICS

THE CERAMIC VASES OF THE HAN PERIOD REPEAT THE ELEGANTLY simple forms of the bronze vases enumerated above: three-footed *ting* and *hsien* vases, *lei* urns, and, above all, those *hu* vases which cannot be better described than by calling them — in defiance of the accepted definition of these latter — "handleless amphoras," with a full body and narrow neck, the body often being adorned by rings or bands bearing figures.[1] But these rings and bands are always remarkably sober, and the merit of the typical Han vase lies in this sobriety. The simplicity of the form, which is the same as that of the corresponding bronzes, assumes a new value in virtue of the material: what was concentrated force in the powerful bronze becomes pure elegance in the fragile ceramic ware. People are fond of comparing Han with Greek vases in this respect and have tried to trace Greek influence in the China of the second century. But we need only recall the stark simplicity of contour of the Chóu bronzes to see that the principles of this art are indeed specifically Chinese. If these bronzes are rendered in terms of ceramics and lightened by removing their decoration in relief, which is hard to retain in the different medium, we arrive at the *hu* vases which we have just compared, not unjustifiably, to Greco-Roman amphoras.

We shall deal a little later, in connexion with the sculpture, with the ornament in relief on the bands with figures which adorn the slope of the neck or the flanks of the vases.

Under the Han dynasty of Lo-yang, in the first and second cen-

[1] Hobson: *Eumorfopoulos Collection, Catalogue of Pottery and Porcelain*, I, Pl. III, Fig. 10; Marquet de Vasselot and Ballot: *Musée du Louvre, Chinese Pottery*, I, Pl. I.

turies of our era, we see the appearance of a glazed ware. According to Professor Pelliot, this innovation in technique probably came from the West. The term *tz'ü* (*ts'eu*), which was afterwards to be applied to porcelain, was first used in connexion with this simply enamelled ware. "Taking this enamelled ware as a starting-point, the discovery of kaolin was arrived at by a series of tentative experiments, during which the process of vitrification was applied not only to the enamel, but also to the very body of the object itself. Once this improvement had been effected, the name of *tz'ü* was transferred from the enamel of glazed ware to porcelain proper."[1]

From the point of view of colour, the substance of which Han glazed pottery is made is a clay which assumes a reddish tone on firing. "The glaze," writes Mr. Hobson, "the basis of which is a silicate of lead, has a warm tone which, superimposed on the red, produces a brown shade.[2] But most often the glaze is coloured with oxide of copper (of a greyish yellow), the result of which is a fine leaf-green," verging on yellow.[3]

THE HAN BAS-RELIEFS

IN SPEAKING OF HAN POTTERY WE HAVE PURPOSELY TREATED THE reliefs, and the painting with which they are sometimes adorned, as a separate question; for these reliefs and paintings are connected with the broader subject of Han sculpture, which we should prefer to approach in connexion with the funeral bas-reliefs.

Contrary to what might be expected, the first specimens of Han sculpture with which we are acquainted are not reliefs, but statues in the round, in the shape of animals, set up in 117 B.C. on the tomb of the Chinese general Ho Ch'ü-ping (Ho K'iu-ping), who had de-

[1] Professor Pelliot's lecture on Chinese art, of May 22, 1927.

[2] Hobson: *Eumorfopoulos Collection, Pottery and Porcelain*, I, Pl. II, Fig. 6, and Pl. XII, Fig. 80.

[3] Ibid., Pl. II, Fig. 9.

feated the Huns and led a cavalry raid as far as the T'ien-shan Mountains. The mission of Segalen and Lartigue, in 1913, and afterwards the second Lartigue mission, found, in particular, at the foot of this worthy's tumulus, a great statue of a horse trampling on a barbarian, and a recumbent statue of an animal of the bovine tribe (Fig. 40).[1]

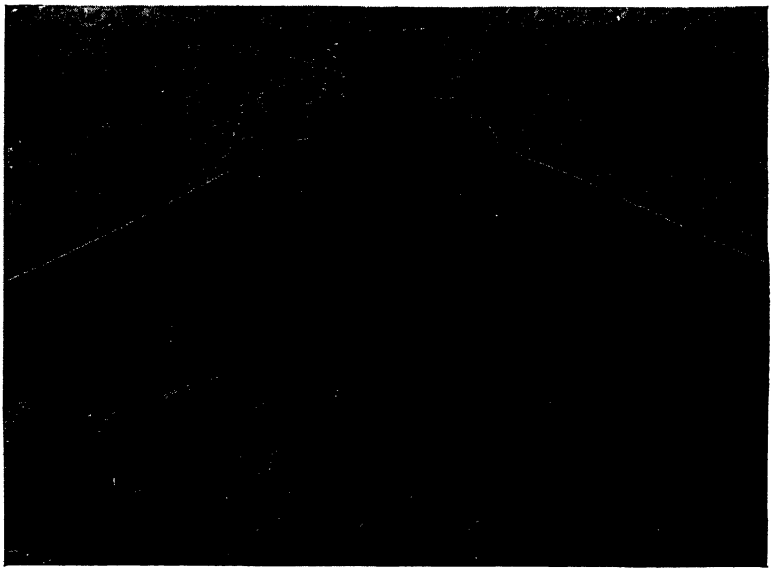


FIGURE 40
Tomb of Ho Ch'ü-ping, 117 B.C.
— *Photo, Segalen, Lartigue and de Voisins*

They are rude works, very primitive in appearance, and appear quite out of harmony with all that we know of Han canons of art. Perhaps what they really represent is a somewhat clumsy attempt to render a subject in the recalcitrant material stone, by means of a new method — that of sculpture in the round. This experiment was, moreover, contrary to the general tendency of Han art, which was, as we have

[1] Lartigue: "*Au tombeau de Houo K'iu-ping*," *Artibus Asiæ*, 1927, II, 85; Carl W. Bishop: "Notes on the Tomb of Ho Ch'ü-ping," ibid., 1928, I.

all three of which go back to the second century of our era. In Ho-nan we may note, in particular, the pillars of Teng-feng-hsien, dating from between 118 and 123 of our era, and in Shan-tung the chamber of Hsiao-t'ang-shan, dating from before 129, and the group known as that of Wu Liang-tz'ŭ, the inscriptions of which belong to the years between 147 and 167; also, in Ssŭ-ch'uan, the pillar of Ch'ü-hsien (K'iu-hsien), dated 121. The most ancient of all is the slab in the Von der Heydt collection, dating from 114 (Fig. 41).

The technique adopted by the sculptors of these Han funeral monuments is of three varieties. Sometimes the outline of the figures is simply represented by an incised line, in accordance with the purely graphic or linear method usual in Han work; sometimes — as in the group of Wu Liang-tz'ŭ, the figures are " reserved " by hollowing out the stone round the design, so that this is left as a plane surface; sometimes again, as on the Von der Heydt slab, the reserved figures are no longer absolutely flat, but are in very slight relief. With the exception of this last method, the technique remains faithful, not only to the usual Han linear style, but also to the predilection of this school for plane surfaces. With their flat relief and their purely graphic appearance, the Han funeral slabs of Ho-nan and Shan-tung present all the characteristics of mere " paintings with the chisel," as they have been called.

In fact, as such leading connoisseurs of Chinese art and archæology as Professor Pelliot and Monsieur Vignier insist, all the signs seem to point to the theory that the Han reliefs which have come down to us — certain of which were, moreover, polychrome — were simply a reproduction in terms of the chisel, for the benefit of the dead, of the paintings which adorned the palaces or dwelling-places of the living.[1]

[1] For a confirmation of this fact see the document quoted by Chavannes: *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale*, I, p. 32.

As regards painting proper, scarcely any has come down to us from the Han period.[1] But we possess a faithful reproduction of it, minus the colour, in the more permanent medium of stone, from the slabs of which rubbings, or inked squeezes, have been taken by Chavannes or his followers.

These copies on stone of lost originals have been dismissed as mere artisans' work; indeed, they are no doubt as a rule mediocre replicas. Moreover, no tombs have been discovered but those of persons of secondary importance, which, it would seem, can give but a feeble idea of the decorations of princely burying-places. Yet these stone frescoes are enough to enable us to form an idea of what the real frescoes must have been which served as their model; for even on the slabs from Ho-nan and Shan-tung we find in these great hunting and battle scenes, as well as in the compositions based on a mythology which is now almost entirely lost, splendid masterpieces of animal sculpture and military pageantry. On due consideration it would seem that at that period nothing but Greek vases could show such *genre* scenes or epic visions.

If we turn over the pages of Chavannes's great album,[2] we shall see the linear style of Han art displaying its full capabilities in these various classes of composition.

First come the mythological figures which were the heritage of an age-old past.

Here is the goddess Si-wang-mu, "the Queen mother of the West," accompanied or not, as the case may be, by her companion Tung-wang-kung and her familiar animals: the three-footed raven of the sun, the hares of the moon, pounding the drug of immortality,[3] the nine-tailed fox, etc. (Fig. 42). Or else we have the seven stars of the

[1] With various exceptions, including, as we shall see, the painted bricks from Ho-nan-fu, acquired by Monsieur C. T. Loo, now, thanks to the initiative of Mr. Denman Ross, in the Boston Museum; as well as some other bricks with figures, dated A.D. 69, found by the Japanese in Korea.

[2] Chavannes, op. cit., Part I.

[3] Cf. Professor Pelliot's lecture on Chinese art, April 8, 1929.

Great Bear with the figures forming their court. Next come the mythical original founders of civilization, Fu-hsi and his sister Niu-kua, the former holding the set square and the latter the compass, their bodies ending in interlaced serpents' or fishes' tails [1] (Fig. 43). Then



FIGURE 42
Han relief from Shan-tung.
— *Photo, Chavannes*

come the whole series of the legendary " three sovereigns " and " five emperors "; then the fabulous monsters: a sort of centaurs formed of the front part of two bodies joined together; or wild beasts with eight human heads joined to the neck, hydra-wise, by an equal number of serpents' bodies (cf. Fig. 44). But the most characteristic feature of this mythology are the winged beings, certain of which

[1] Professor Pelliot's lecture of March 18, 1929.



FIGURE 43

Relief from the Wu Liang-tz'ŭ.

— *Photo, Chavannes*

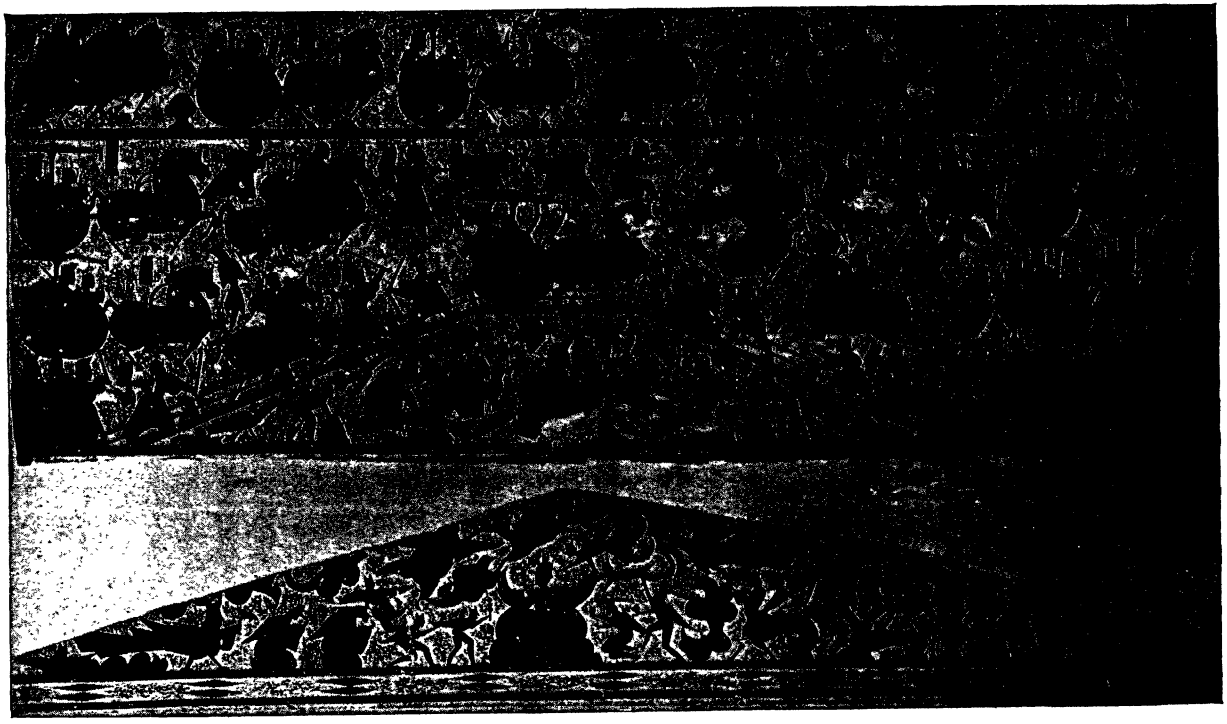


FIGURE 44
Relief from the Wu Liang-tz'ŭ.
— *Photo, Chavannes*

somewhat resemble the gnomes or elves of western Europe, with bodies ending in one or more serpents' tails turned up at the tip, in place of legs (Fig. 43).

An amazing movement animates these fantastic creatures. Witness, for example, an extraordinary scene on the gable pertaining to the front group of chambers of the pseudo Wu Liang-tz'ŭ [1] (Fig. 44), in which a whole collection of mythical beings advances, hovers, or swoops earthward with outstretched wings round a seated divinity, also with wings. One winged sprite is offering the divinity a branch of the " tree with the three pearls "; another kneels before him offering him a goblet; a third appears to be dancing. These little figures, wearing the two-eared cap or long-tailed head-dress of our mediæval jesters, are charming in their elegance. Certain of them, which flit in and out among the monsters surrounding the divinity, are a sort of sphinxes with an animal's body and the head and bust of two human beings, or else human beings with the heads of cocks or horses, or enormous birds, or " harpies " with human heads. We may note that when these elfin creatures touch ground, their extremities have the form of human legs and feet, but when they are flying, their lower limbs, too, end in wings or serpents' tails. There is an amazing freedom and fantasy about them to which Greek vase-painting alone can provide any equivalent.

There are a few large compositions in the tomb of Wu Liang-tz'ŭ representing the various mythological kingdoms: the " kingdom of the waters," the " kingdom of the air," etc. The kingdom of the waters [2] transports us to a strange world in which a divinity advances in a car drawn by fishes, while round him swarms a procession of frogs, tortoises, water-rats, and fishes armed with lances, halberds, swords, and shields. Here we have men riding upon fishes, and there some strange beings with frogs' heads or human heads on fishes'

[1] Chavannes, op. cit., I, Pl. LIII, No. 110. [2] Ibid., I, Pl. LXVI, No. 130.

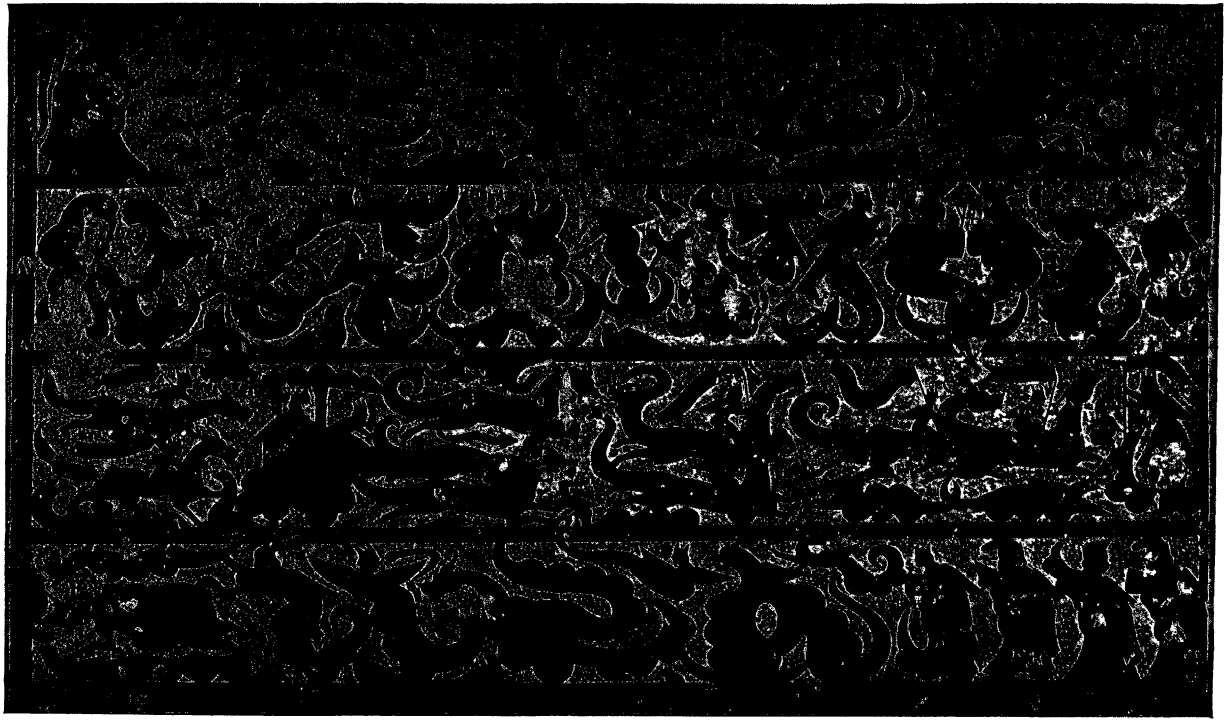


FIGURE 45
Relief from the Wu Liang-tz'ŭ.
— *Photo, Chavannes*

bodies; and, as usual, we find the Han winged genii or gnomes, whose bodies here end in fishes' tails.

A little farther on we come to the kingdom of the air (Fig. 45).[1] Here we find cars to which are harnessed winged horses — a strange Chinese version of Pegasus — amid swirling clouds represented by a series of spirals connected by long trails and often ending in birds' heads; upon these living clouds, like a flight of birds, climb or ride the usual agile winged gnomes, sometimes with human legs, sometimes with extremities ending in double serpents' tails. The movement which animates this airy rout is indescribable.

Nor is the fantastic impression any less striking on the gravestone devoted to the divinities of the thunder and the rain.[2] Here the winged sprites are mounted upon madly galloping dragons, or else fly above them, guiding them from the air. We need only compare these beasts, half tiger, half horse and built for speed, with the geometrical dragons on the Chóu bronzes to realize what a discharge of the latent force concentrated in Chóu art took place in the Han period. After this picture of speed the row immediately below shows us a vision of rare power in the court of the thunder-god. This deity is a threatening figure seated on a cloud chariot drawn by six servitors in whom a sense of effort is suggested with a fine realism as they trample the clouds underfoot, goaded on by a winged gnome. Beneath a vault of fire, symbolized by the curve of a two-headed dragon, a mythical being, leaping on the back of a prostrate victim, is striking it with lightning by driving a chisel into the back of its neck with hammer-blows, while round the whole scene coil ribbons of cloud with rain-spirits emptying their urns. In spite of the distorted impression produced by the black figures on the "squeeze" of inked paper, the scene is intensely dramatic; and this impression is borne out by the next row, with its ogres, bears, and warriors devouring children or brandishing all kinds of weapons (Fig. 46).

[1] Ibid., I, Pl. LXVII, No. 131.

[2] Ibid., I, Pl. LXVIII, No. 132.



FIGURE 46
Relief from the Wu Liang-tz'ŭ.
— Photo, Chavannes

The kingdom of the wind and storm [1] is even more astonishing in its swirling movement. On high we see the wind-god in his chariot drawn by fantastic quadrupeds with serpents' tails, and escorted by winged genii riding similar beasts at a frenzied gallop. On the middle rows is the storm, showing the thunder-god holding his hammer in his hands and beating on the drum, while goddesses race past "brandishing the cords of the rain, which lash like a whip." Below is a tangled mass of fleeting clouds. Beneath the mighty breath of the wind-god the clouds gallop like a fantastic squadron, from which emerge the heads of dragons, wild beasts, and birds, or the head and bust of the gnomes. Here we see birds with outspread wings, apparently growing out of the cloud and leading it onward, here a cloud of sprites whirling in corresponding volutes ending in a serpent's tail.[2] This representation of the cloud as a living thing, endowed with the attributes of animals or gods, this conception of it as the abode of genii, and itself one of them, is undoubtedly one of the permanent features of the Chinese canon of art. We may remember the powerful, indeterminate forms of the Chóu period, in which the thunder-pattern grew by imperceptible degrees into a dragon. If we render this geometrical mode of expression in terms of the living line of Han art, we arrive at the cloud-birds, cloud-dragons, and cloud-sprites described above. Only a few stages more and we come to the Sung or Yuan landscape with its misty distances, in which the haze is everything, and the veils of cloud are the very soul of things, enabling us to divine, behind the concrete substance, the one, changing essence of the Divine — the final proof of this being afforded by the sudden appearance in a Yuan painting of the Dragon itself in the heart of the cloud (Fig. 253). Throughout the whole of the cycle of schools and technical developments the æsthetic ideal — or, rather, its intellectual basis — remains the same.

[1] Ibid., I, Pl. LXIX, No. 133.

[2] Ibid., I, Pl. LXX, No. 134

On the next slab [1] the cloud completes the process of developing into both animal and god. First we have a flying cavalcade of winged quadrupeds with birds' heads and serpents' tails, some of them ridden by the accustomed gnomes. Next come Fou-hsi and Niu-kua with their attributes, their bodies ending in intertwined serpents' tails; next other winged genii whose legs, also transformed into serpents' tails, trail along the ground like a cloud. Then a cavalcade of winged horse-dragons of a remarkable beauty of line, with snorting heads and whinnying nostrils, bestridden, jockey-wise, by our friends the winged gnomes. And lastly, on the bottom row, dragons, birds, and sprites once more turn into a flying cloud, with serpentine bodies which barely touch the ground and glide through the air coiling in nebulous tapering spirals. In this relief free course has been given to the most untrammelled imagination (Fig. 45). We know few scenes filled with such a rush of movement, either in Egyptian or in Hellenic art. Egyptian or Greek design is full of plastic reminiscences, which give substance to its figures and so lessen the lightness of their flight; but here, thanks to the deep-rooted predilection of Han art for a simple, linear outline, we have movement pure and unadulterated. What a change from Chóu art! But again, what potential force must have been held captive in the dynamic art of that period for it to rush forth with such frenzied action and giddy speed when barely released!

After the heavens we descend to earth. After the fantastic rout of monsters and genii we come to the epic visions of the pre-Han and Han ages, to scenes of hunting and of war.

In our opinion, sufficient attention has not been paid to the realism with which animal life is represented on these Han hunting-scenes. In one of the very earliest plates of Chavannes's album (I, XV, 26) we find, on the pillars of K'ai's mother at Teng-feng-hsien, in Ho-nan,

[1] Ibid., I, Pl. LXX, No. 134.

two horses tethered to a tree, the first of which is tearing up the ground in its impatience while the second rears at its side, which show us what a gulf separates this elegant precision of line from the un-

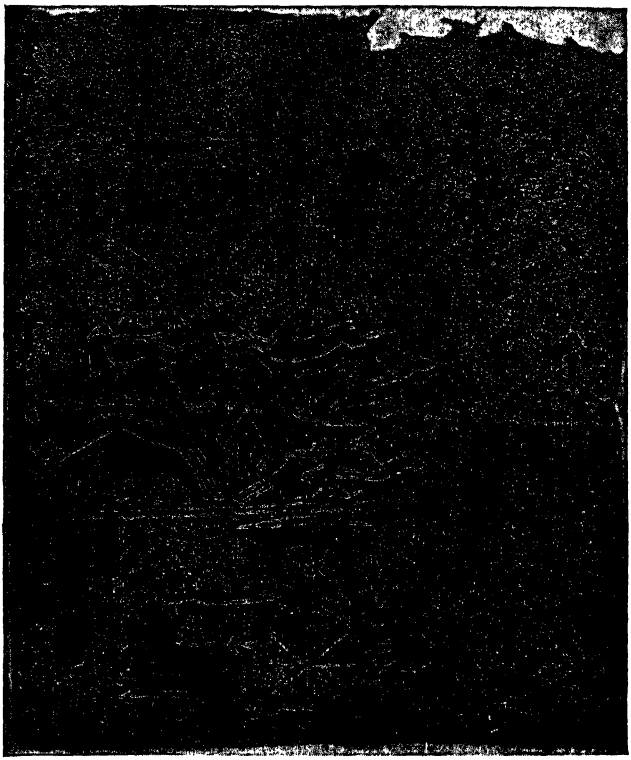


FIGURE 47
A rubbing made by Chavannes.
(*See* Mission archéologique, *p. 159, Pl. LXXXV*)

fortunate attempt at sculpture in the round at the tomb of Ho Ch'ü-ping. A little farther on,[1] a pillar in Shao-she shows us a hind turning its long neck between two galloping horsemen, one of whom turns to let fly an arrow at it — a scene as full of movement as the Assyrian

[1] Ibid., I, XIX, No. 35.

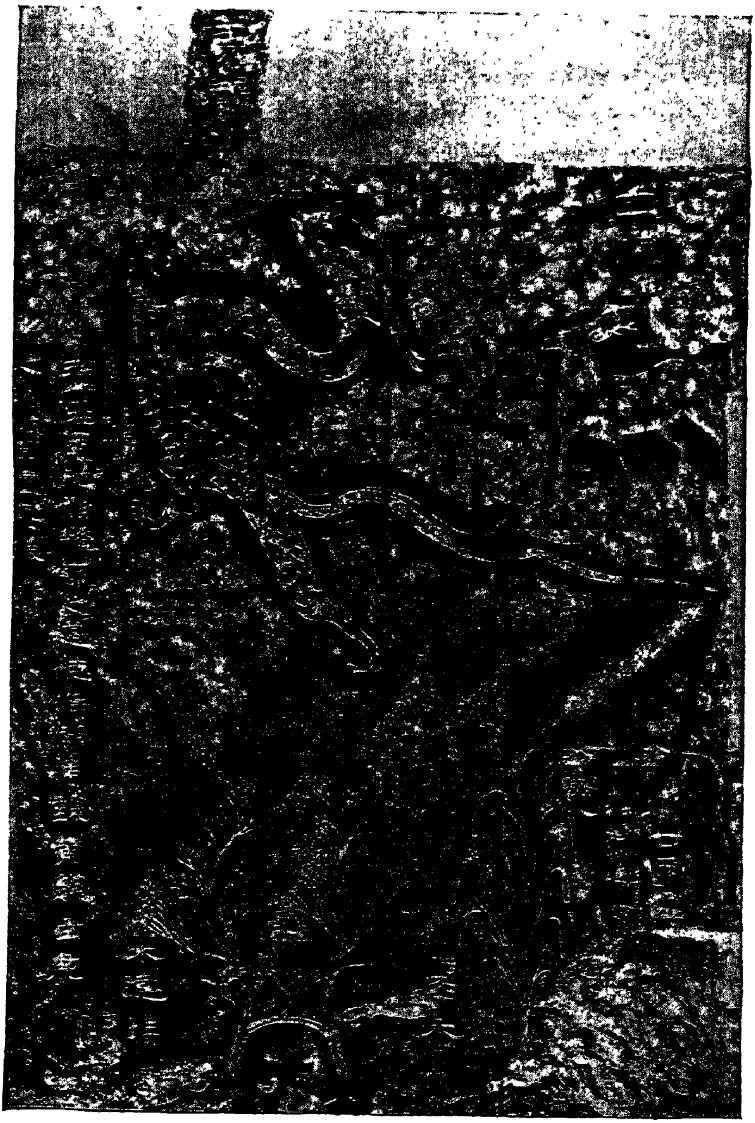


FIGURE 48
Relief from Li-hsi's tomb, A.D. 171.
— *Photo, Chavannes*

hunting-scenes, and one which proclaims that a great art of animal sculpture has arisen in the Far East. The dragon snorting before a ram's head, on the next plate,[1] a long, sinuous, slender beast, like a sort of tiger with the gliding movement of a reptile, and the dog darting like an arrow from its leash at a leaping hare are groups full

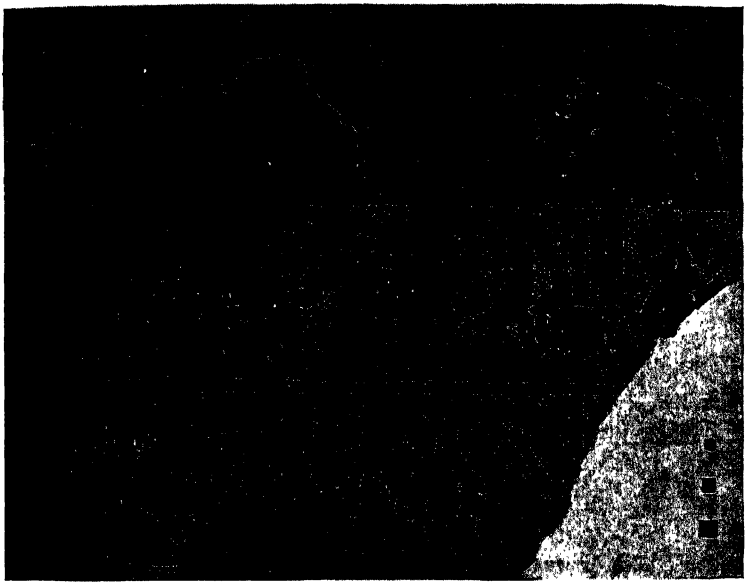


FIGURE 49
Han cavalry.
— *From a rubbing by Chavannes*

of wonderful elegance and life. The same qualities are illustrated on the lower portion of the east wall at Hsiao-t'ang-shan, where there are some dogs leaping upon a herd of deer which may be reckoned among the finest specimens of this type of subject in the whole history of art — witness, for example, the dog biting the hind in the leg.[2] At the tomb of Wu Liang-tz'ŭ realism is the order of the day. The third slab from the back row of chambers shows on its lower line of

[1] Ibid., XX, 37–8.

[2] Ibid., Pl. XXVIII, Fig. 50.

carvings some figures of hunters on the way back from the chase, carrying their bag, which consists of a huge wild boar and two tigers. The truth to nature with which the fall of the dead bodies has been rendered — especially the hind quarters of the boar and the paw of one of the tigers — and the way in which the hunters have loaded up their burden are worthy of Assyrian art or of the reliefs of Tāq-i-Bustān. And what words can do justice to the pig which a peasant is



FIGURE 50
Relief from the Wu Liang-tz'ŭ.
— *Photo, Chavannes*

holding back by the hind leg (Fig. 46)? The realism of this group verges on that of *genre* painting. Farther on there is a stag fleeing before a huge mastiff from which a huntsman is about to slip the leash.[1] At Chao-ts'ieng-ts'uen in Shan-tung[2] are some more charmingly drawn stags and hares which are the very incarnation of flight and speed, and some greyhounds, either held in leash or being let loose on the hares, which are full of elegance (Fig. 42 and 47). The bas-relief from the tomb of Li-hsi, in Shen-si, which bears the date 171 of our era,[3] already foreshadows the reliefs of Ssŭ-ch'uan, which

[1] Ibid., Pl. LXXVI, No. 146.
[2] Ibid., Pl. LXXXV, No. 159, LXXXVI, No. 161.
[3] Ibid., Pl. LXXXIX, No. 167.

are, moreover, of the same period. Indeed, Chinese art has produced few drawings of such perfect elegance as the fantastic "yellow dragon" and the noble "white stag" which we here reproduce — not to speak of the floral grace of the bushes represented below (Fig. 48). Nor was later Chinese art to produce more elegant birds — pheasants, peacocks, etc. — even in the Sung and Ming periods, than those in one of the chambers of Hsiao-t'ang-shan.[1] And what words can express the wonderful lifelikeness of the monkey climbing up on a roof, on the same slab?

Last come the princely cavalcades and battles. The treatment of friezes of vehicles is somewhat similar to that in Egyptian paintings or on certain Greek vases. At Hsiao-t'ang-shan we see the progress of a king's chariot of state, surrounded by a brilliant escort of cavalry. The horses are sturdy beasts with powerful chests and hind quarters, which hold their heads high and advance with a noble prancing action (Fig. 49, 50). The various kinds of trot and gallop are finely observed, in a fashion which has, however, absolutely no analogy with Scythian art. The horsemen, too, sit their mounts well, man and beast forming one true whole, with a very just sense of proportion.

Next comes the battle, an engagement between mounted archers. One side is stated to be the army of "Hu-wang" — perhaps of some barbarian chief, that is, whom the Chinese squadrons are here seen in course of routing.[2] In this scene, too, there is no monotony. Though all the war-horses are advancing at full gallop, the action of each beast is well distinguished from the rest. Here one of the "barbarians" has been hit by an arrow and is falling from his horse, there a headless corpse lies on the ground while his charger takes to flight. In the rear some kneeling prisoners are awaiting their fate near the victorious general, while some heads have already been stuck on pikes. If this is not an episode from the epic combats of China in

[1] Ibid., Pl. XXIV, No. 45.

[2] Ibid., I, XXVI, No. 47.

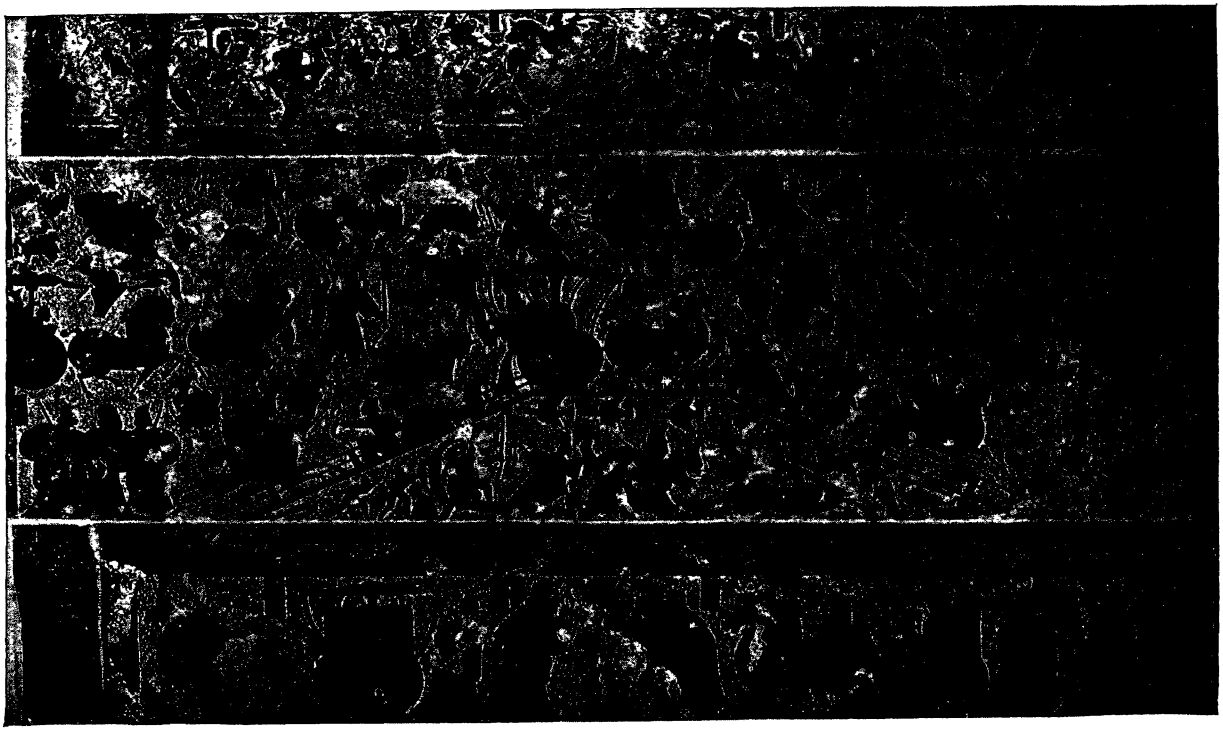


FIGURE 51
Battle on a bridge.
— Photo, Chavannes

central Asia, it is perhaps at any rate a mythological scene based on the events of the wars with the Huns. However this may be, there can be no doubt that the Han conquests in Asia left their trace upon art. On these same slabs at Hsiao-t'ang-shan we see in the midst of a brilliant cavalcade a camel and an elephant with riders on their backs, which have evidently come, one from the Gobi desert, the other from India or Indo-China.[1]

The cavalcades of Wu Liang-tz'ŭ have less elegance, but greater power. The horses — whether draught- or saddle-horses — are extraordinarily squat and bull-necked, in contrast with their legs, which are slight; but they are fuming with impatience, tossing their heads and champing their bits. These are indeed epic visions, worthy to illustrate the conquests of a Pan Ch'ao on his victorious march through central Asia.[2] In many scenes we have horsemen and charioteers rushing into action, in whom we may note the extraordinary variety of the attitudes and episodes. The freedom of movement and intensity of action in these scenes, travestied though they may be in the squeezes, repay close examination. Once again, none but Greek vase-paintings, which are to some extent the equivalent of these Shantung reliefs, present such spontaneity; for the treatment of similar scenes by Assyrian artists is more conventional. The battle on a bridge which occurs twice on the tomb of Wu Liang-tz'ŭ is one of the most dramatic specimens of this epic art, with its various episodes of the charge, the *mêlée*, and the rout (Fig. 44, 45).[3] And so these reliefs, or, more properly speaking, drawings on stone, on the funeral slabs of Ho-nan and Shan-tung are already, if not paintings, at any rate trustworthy evidence of what Han painting must have been.

But we have still better evidence than this. The Boston Museum has acquired from Monsieur C. T. Loo some funeral bricks, identi-

[1] Ibid., XXVII, 48.
[2] Ibid., LII, No. 108.
[3] Ibid., LIII, 109, and LXXI, 136. Perhaps here, too, we have an echo of the great wars of China against the barbarians of the Gobi desert.

fied as such by Mr. Otto Fischer, from a tomb near Ho-nan-fu, which do, this time, bear real Han paintings of the first century of our era. Though partly effaced, these paintings give us a glimpse of an art with a remarkable vigour of line. On the left-hand brick are some figures leading a tiger and a bear on the leash — no doubt for some

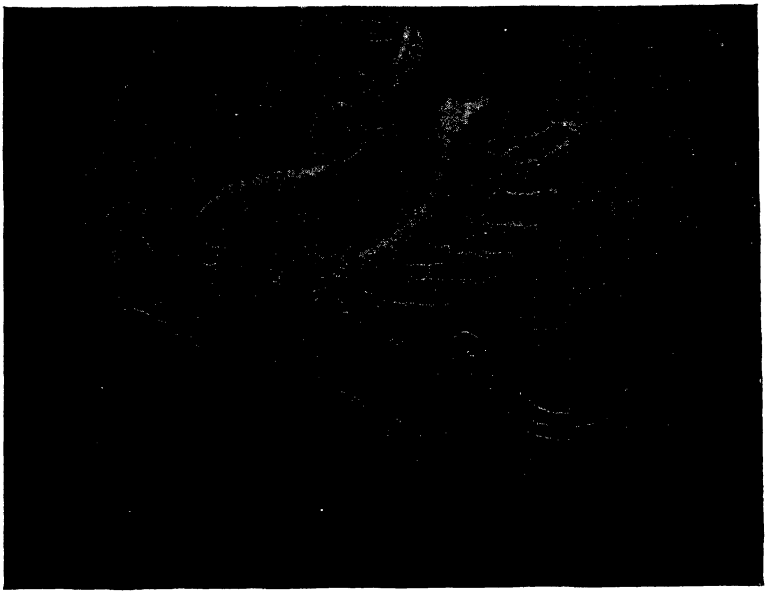


FIGURE 52
Shēn pillar. The Red Bird.
— *Photo, Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins*

fight of wild beasts before a great nobleman — which are very fine works, in every way worthy of the finest reliefs of Hsiao-t'ang-shan. Moreover, here we have a complete composition in fresco with a skilful and well-grouped *ensemble* showing the court of a prince, with the noblemen for whom the contest is being given, some spectators squatting round, some extra animals, etc. On the right-hand brick the subject is more worn away. There is an indistinct group of

women, but a little farther on one can make out some "fishermen bringing jewels." Wherever the scene is distinguishable, we are struck by the extraordinary power of the design and animation of the expression.[1]

Such a precious find is evidence of the existence of a school of

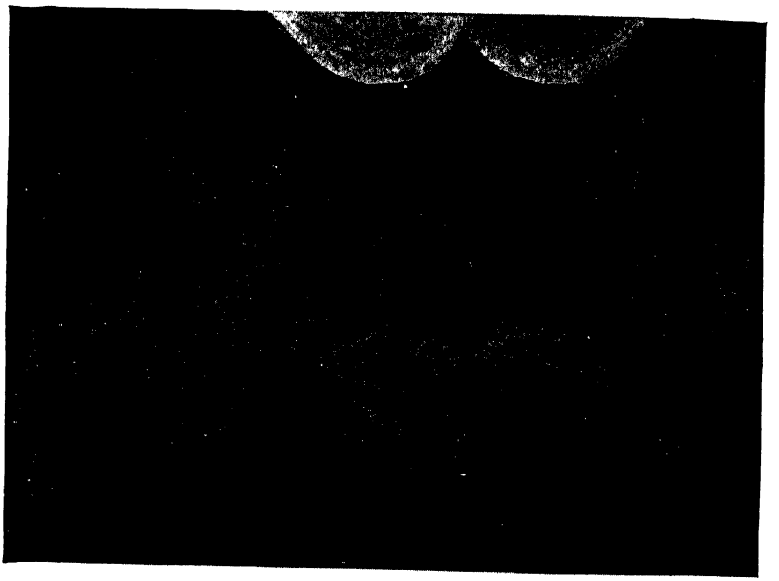


FIGURE 53
Shēn pillar. "The Funeral Cavalcade."
— *Photo, Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins*

painting which had already achieved complete mastery and was capable of producing real masterpieces.

Rather different in character from the reliefs of Shan-tung or Ho-nan are the sculptures on stone of Ssŭ-ch'uan, a study of which was published as a result of the archæological mission of Messrs.

[1] Professor Pelliot's lectures of May 16, 1927 and April 15, 1929. Cf. Otto Fischer: *Die Chinesische Malerei der Han Dynastie* (Berlin, 1931), Pl. 64–73.

Segalen, Lartigue, and Gilbert de Voisins. For whereas the reliefs of Shan-tung and Ho-nan were really, as it were, no more than painting transposed into another medium, the works in Ssŭ-ch'uan are truly sculptural in character. The funeral pillars themselves, with their moderate and just proportions, are already quite sculptural in their architecture — for instance, that erected in honour of Feng Huan at Ch'ü-hsien, dating from A.D. 121, those of P'ing Yang at

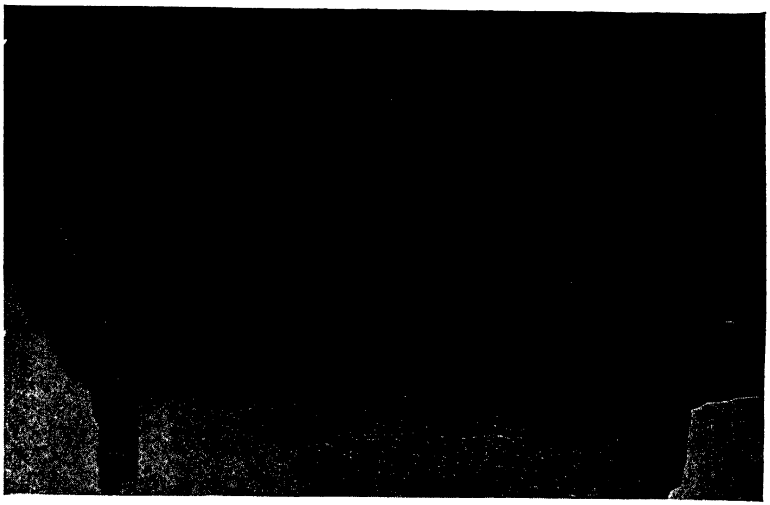


FIGURE 54
Shēn pillar. Archer.
— *Photo, Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins*

Mien-chou, and those of Shēn at Ch'ü-hsien. The Shēn pillars bear witness to an elegance which is curiously in harmony with our own classic taste (Fig. 56). But, above all, the reliefs on these pillars, far from being copies, like the Shan-tung ones, are the direct expression of a great art. What is more, we again find in them the same movement and freedom as in the works of Shan-tung or Ho-nan. I know nothing in Chinese art more masterly, triumphant, or elegant than the sweep of the wings and the stately pose of the red bird on the

front face of the right-hand pillar (Fig. 52), nothing more wildly impassioned than the funeral cavalcade on the front face of the left-hand pillar (Fig. 53), nothing more audacious than the barbarian

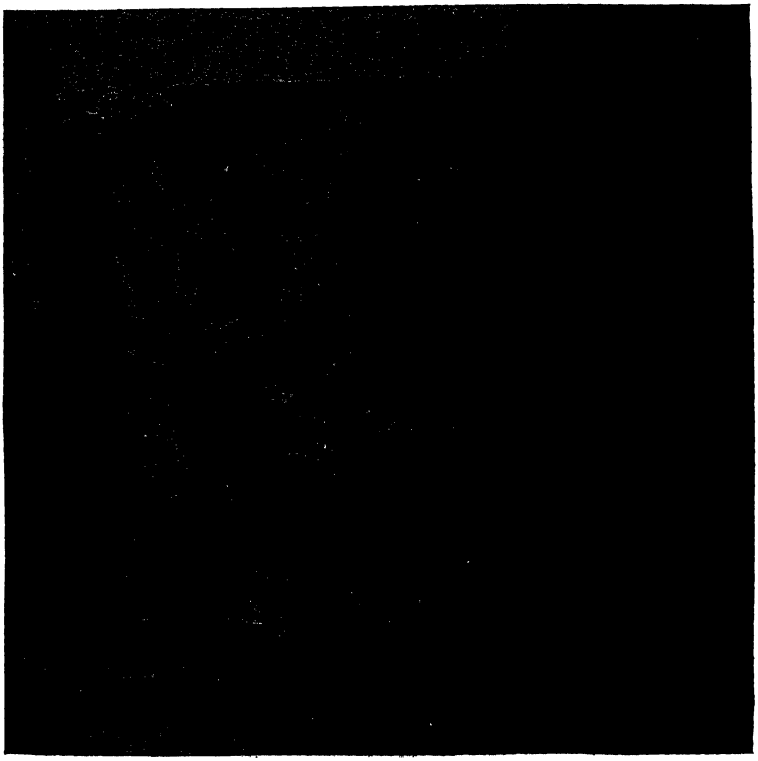


FIGURE 55
Shēn pillar. *T'ao-t'ieh* (ogre).
— *Photo, Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins*

archer on the inner face of the entablature of the left-hand pillar [1] (Fig. 54). Not that the origins of this art do not go far back, being deeply rooted in the Chinese artistic canon of earlier ages. The mask

[1] Segalen, Gilbert de Voisins, and Lartigue: *Mission archéologique en Chine*, Atlas, I, Pl. XXV, XXVI.



FIGURE 56

Shēn pillar.

— Photo Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins

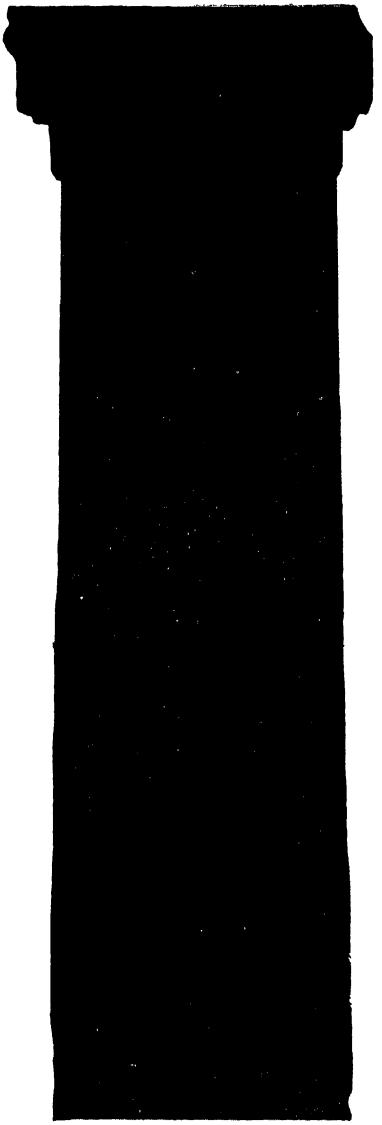


FIGURE 57

Shēn pillar. The White Tiger.
— *Photo, Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins*

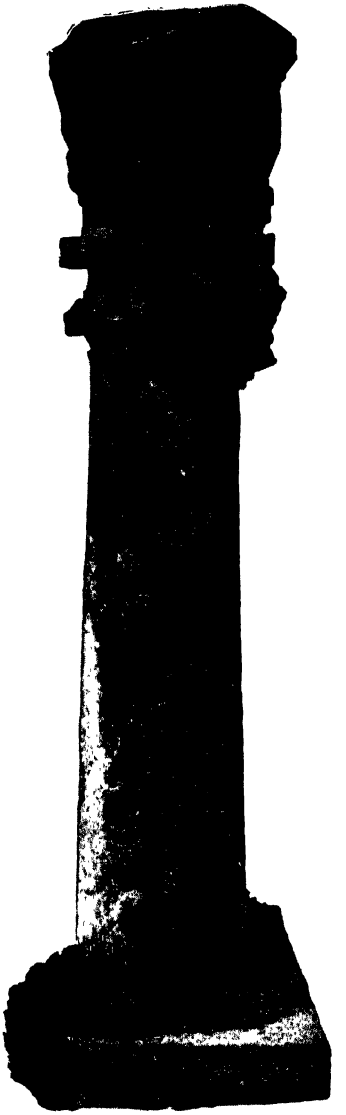


FIGURE 58

Shēn pillar. The Green Dragon.
— *Photo, Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins*

with animal's paws which is to be seen biting at the front face of the left-hand pillar is the usual *t'ao-t'ieh,* now at last carried out in a tangibly plastic and concrete form, though still treated as a decorative motive (Fig. 55); while both the "white tiger" and the "green



FIGURE 59
Tomb of Pao
— *Photo, Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins*

dragon" on the inner faces of the right-hand and left-hand pillars, with their long, sinuous bodies treated as flat surfaces, might have been found on the jades familiar to European collectors (Fig. 56–58). But here, as on the jades, we see the triumph of that elegance which marks the supreme culmination of the Han æsthetic canon, or

even, to quote Monsieur Vignier, surpasses it in its fire and passion. This supreme elegance is the product of the Han simplicity and predilection for a graphic linear outline. But it is already beginning to

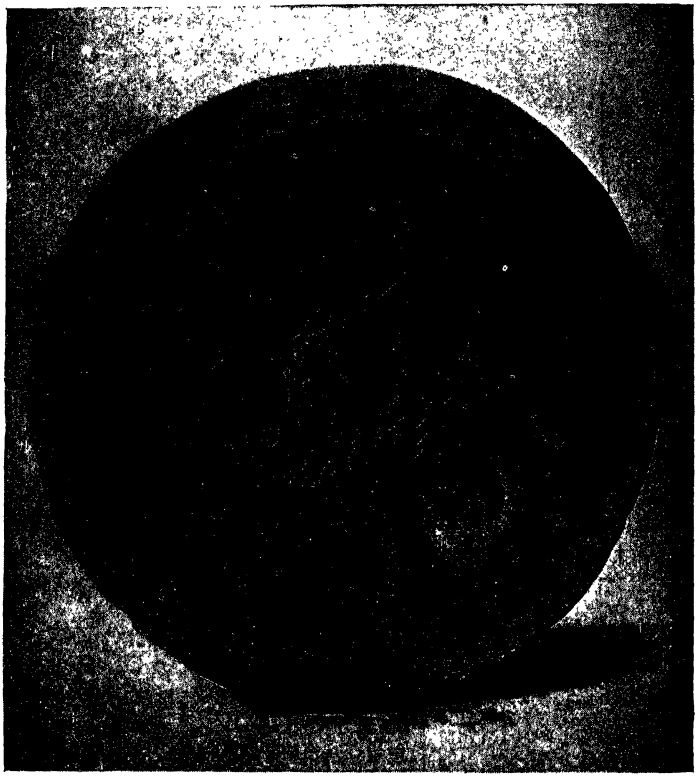


FIGURE 60
Han brick. The Red Bird.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot donation*

shake off these qualities, for it is now verging upon that " neo-Ch'in " — to adopt Monsieur Vignier's happy nomenclature — with its animal subjects, which was to characterize the period of the Six Dynasties.

It is at this precise point in its evolution that Chinese art seems to approximate the most closely to Greek art, no doubt because at this period it was subject to conventions of an analogous order. Witness

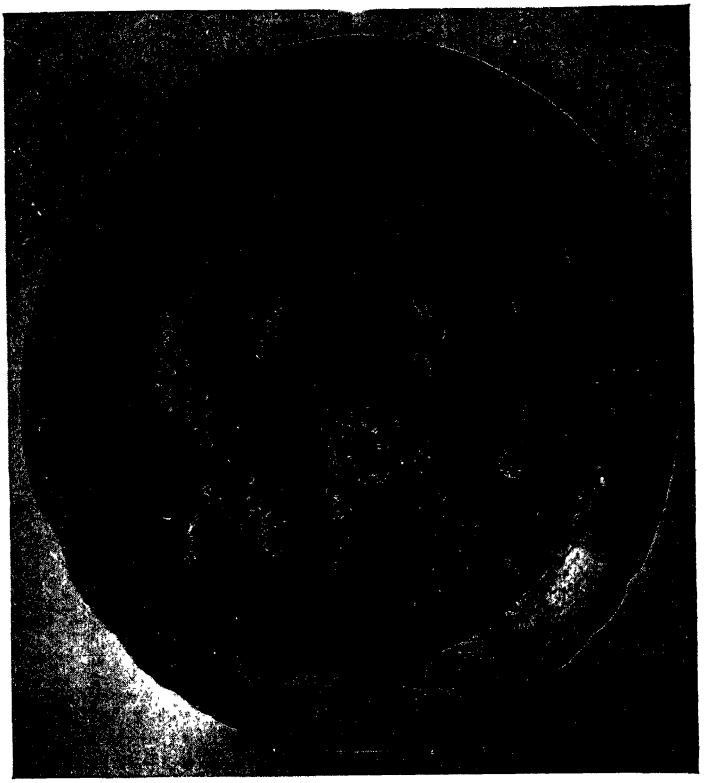


FIGURE 61
Han brick with dragon.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot donation*

the chariot-teams on the tomb of Pao at Chao-hua-hsien, dating from the third century of our era (Fig. 59). In this connexion — as has occurred to us, too — it is tempting to recall the fact that at this very time Greco-Roman artists (for example, Tita — i.e., Titus) were

painting the frescoes at Mirān to the south of Lob-nor,[1] which will be discussed in the next chapter. It may be added that Ssŭ-ch'uan, being situated on the western frontiers of China, was predisposed to the reception of influences coming from the Gobi region. But in our



FIGURE 62
Han brick with tiger.
— *Henri Rivière collection. Photo, Laniepce*

opinion it is not at all necessary to assume any infiltration of Greco-Roman influence. It is sufficient to assume that the æsthetic atmosphere of the two civilizations was somewhat similar.

We may associate with the same canons of art the motives on the Han terracotta tiles and other bricks, representing the symbolic red

[1] See below, pp. 155–8.

bird, tiger, or dragon. We here reproduce some of the specimens in the possession of the Musée Guimet (Fig. 60, 61) or the Henri Rivière collection (Fig. 62). Though the red bird in the Musée Guimet lacks the triumphant zest of that on the Shēn pillar, the dragon, the curve of which is adapted to the circular form of the tile,

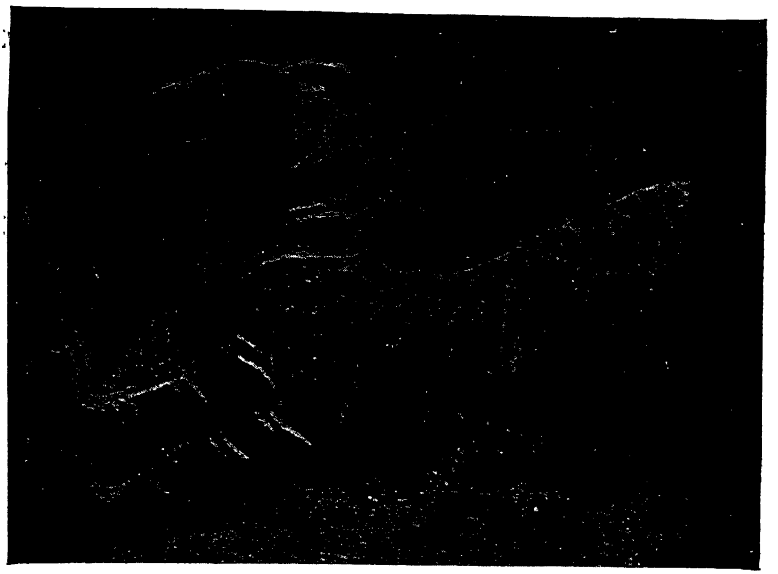


FIGURE 63

Han brick, with tiger.

— Formerly in the C. T. Loo collection. Photo, C. T. Loo

does not fall far short of the dazzling rush of the one photographed by Lartigue and Segalen. As for the tigers on the bricks in the Musée Guimet, the Rivière collection, and the Loo collection (Fig. 63), the Han cult of pure line has never risen to such power of movement as in these representations of feline beasts rearing with gaping jaws in an attitude of aggression, or springing with bared claws with all the stunning impact of a surprise attack.[1]

[1] Perceval Yetts: "Notes on Chinese Roof-tiles," in *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society, 1927–1928*, p. 13.

SCULPTURE IN HAN CERAMICS

IN SUBJECT AND STYLE THE CERAMIC DECORATION OF THE SECOND Han dynasty appears to be identical with that of the reliefs of Hsiao-t'ang-shan or the pillars of Ssŭ-ch'uan. In both we find for the most part friezes in relief representing hunting-scenes or mythological beings in pursuit of one another.

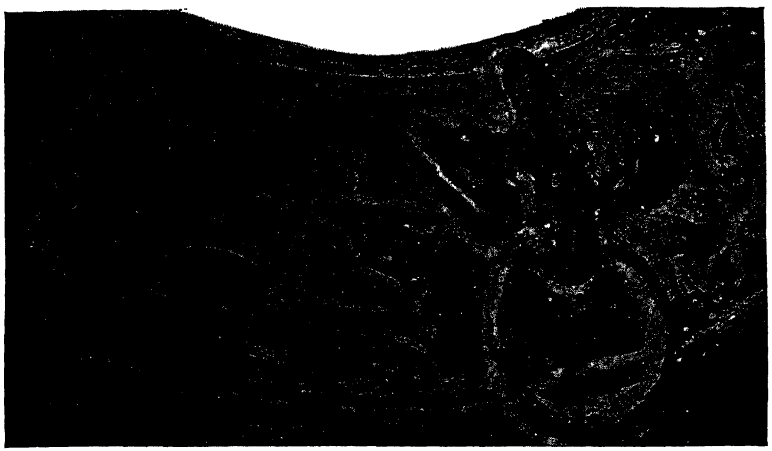


FIGURE 64
Relief from a Han vase, in the Eumorfopoulos collection.
— By courtesy of Mr. Eumorfopoulos

There are three beautiful green-glazed *hu* vases in European collections which in themselves afford sufficient data for defining the characteristics of this art. The first, adorned on its sloping shoulder with a frieze of horsemen and animals, has been acquired by the Louvre;[1] another, with a border of running animals or hunting-scenes, belongs to the Eumorfopoulos collection (Fig. 64);[2] the third, which is reproduced by Professor Sirén, is the property of Dr.

[1] Marquet de Vasselot and Ballot: *Chinese Pottery* (in the Louvre), I, Pl. I.
[2] Hobson's *Catalogue*, I, Pl. 79 and 81.

Hultmark of Stockholm.[1] The leaping beasts of the cat tribe on the Louvre vase, the splendid menacing tiger of the Hultmark vase, the fantastic wild beast hemmed in by a pack of hounds, and the charging wild boar of the Eumorfopoulos vase have a quality of movement far

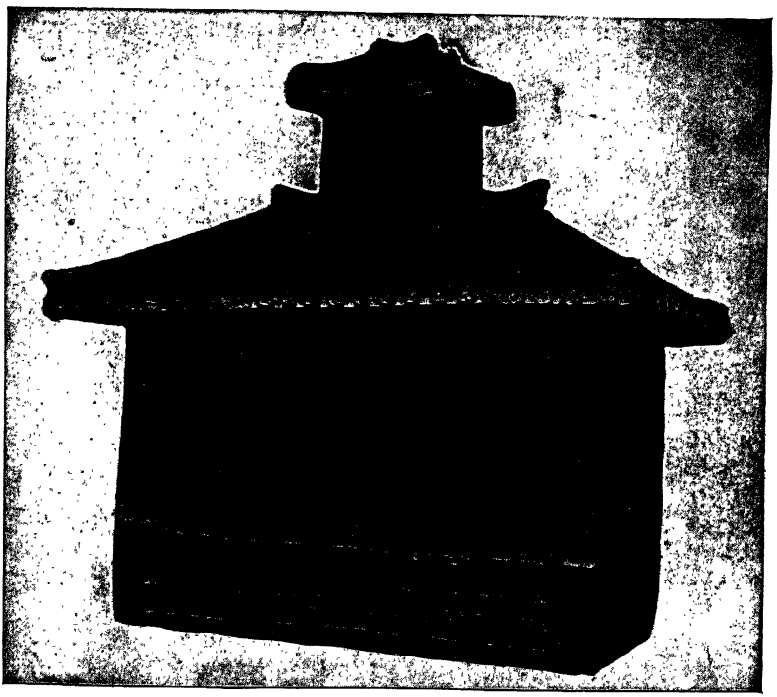


FIGURE 65
Han terracotta representing a house.
— *Musée Cernuschi. Photo, Gauthier*

removed from all formalism and convention. This blend of freedom and realism, as we have already remarked, places this art on a higher plane than the corresponding animal art of Assyria or Greece, so that to find anything equivalent to it we have to compare it with Ægean

[1] Sirén, *Early Chinese Arts*, II, 79.

art. But here again there is, in our opinion, no question of foreign influences; at any rate, nothing could be more unlike these Han hunting-scenes, which are all spontaneity and absolute freedom, than what is known as "Scytho-Sarmatian" art, in which the animal motive is bent and tormented into conformity with the rules of a complicated heraldic style. The two styles represent ideals of art

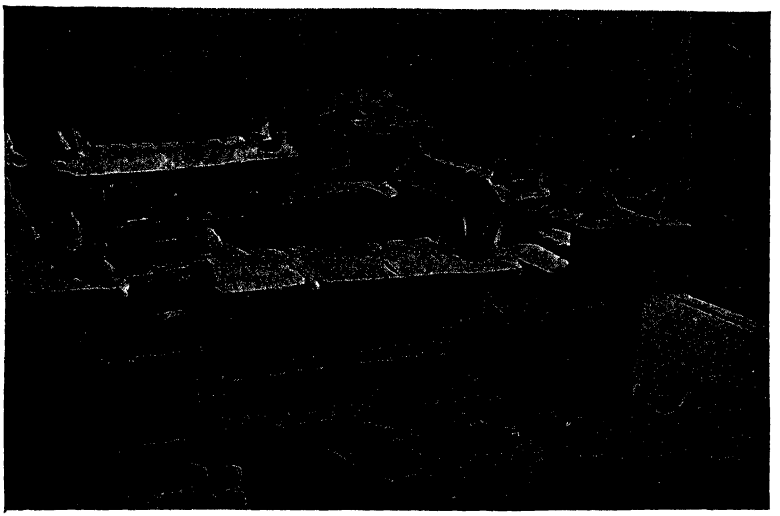


FIGURE 66
Han terracotta fortress found near Bac-ninh.
— *Photo, École française d'Extrême-Orient*

which are diametrically opposed to each other. Moreover, the friezes which run round the sloping sides of these vases are directly akin to the reliefs on the Han pillars of Ssŭ-ch'uan, which it has not so far occurred to anybody to call Scythian. The wildly galloping horseman and the goblin mounted on a long, slender dragon on the Eumorfopoulos vase (cf. Fig. 64) are directly reminiscent of the fire, triumphal impetuosity, and youthful audacity of the beasts and archers on the Shēn pillar.

Lastly, there are a certain number of Han vases with painted decoration, of the second and third centuries, often bearing hunting-scenes absolutely in the style of the reliefs to which we have just referred. This remark applies to the pair of vases recently acquired by the British Museum, about fifteen and a half inches in height, on which there are some scenes with prodigious intensity of life and movement drawn in black outline on a white band — notably a great wading bird which flies off flapping its wings with a wondrous elegance.[1]

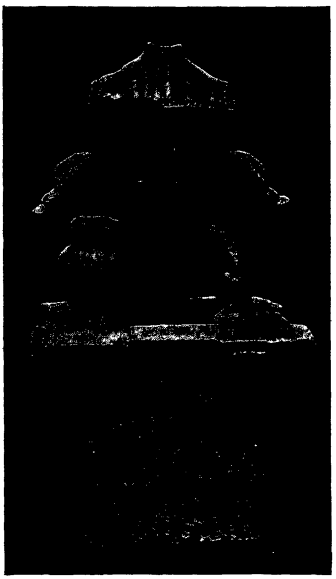


FIGURE 67
Han terracotta well.
— *Musée Cernuschi. Photo, Gauthier*

Han pottery — whether in the form of simple terracotta or of glazed ware — not only forms an adjunct to sculpture by virtue of its reliefs, but, in the funeral statuettes, actually develops into sculpture, and sculpture in the round, too.

Chinese funeral statuettes, known as *ming-k'i* (*ming-ts'i*), or *ming-shen*, are inspired by the animistic beliefs prevalent in all primitive societies, being no doubt substitutes for the human and animal victims formerly destined to accompany, wait upon, and entertain the dead man in the other world.[2] However this may be, it was surely in order that the dead man should once more find his occupations and everyday surroundings in the tomb that Han funeral pottery produced such numbers of reproductions in miniature

[1] Binyon: *L'Art asiatique au British Museum, Ars Asiatica*, VI, Pl. XIII, 2. Cf. A. Waley: *Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting*, Pl. 2.

[2] This question was discussed by Professor Pelliot in his lecture on Chinese art, of May 22, 1927. Cf. Carl Hentze: *Chinese Tomb Figures* (1928), pp. 1–75.

of all that went to make up Chinese life at the time: houses (Fig. 65, 66), barns, cow-houses and sheepfolds, wells with buckets,[1] oxen, sheep, pigs, cocks, and watch-dogs, guardians, and exorcists. Whereas



FIGURE 68
Han terracotta dog.
— *Musée Cernuschi. Photo, Gauthier*

the first attempt at sculpture in the round in stone on a large scale — that of the tomb of Ho Ch'ü-ping — seems to have been singularly premature and clumsy, this sort of "funeral toys" and the little

[1] *Eumorfopoulos Collection*, I, Pl. V, VI, VII.

figures found with them in the tombs display a real ease of technique. They are of course very rough works, simplified to the last degree, for the purpose for which they were intended precluded any sort of embellishment. Intended as they were for the doubtful light of the life beyond the grave, there was no need to load them with superfluous

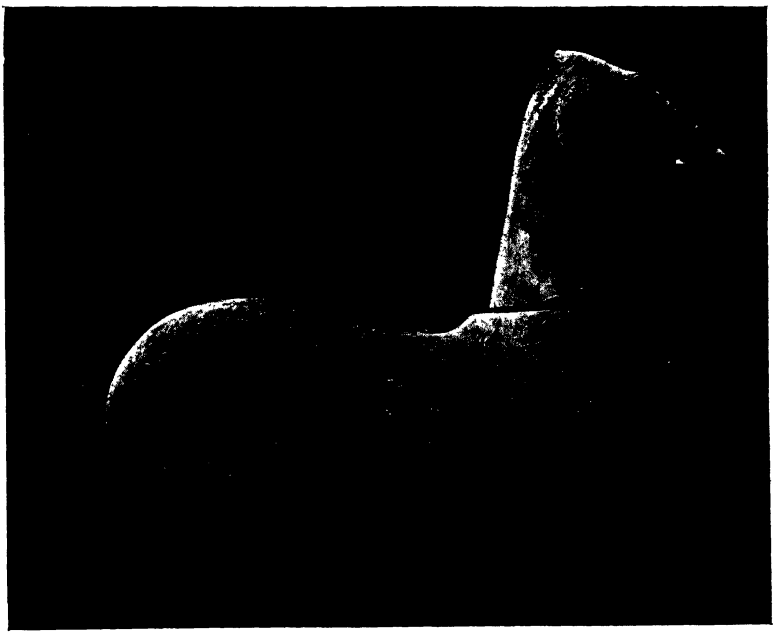


FIGURE 69
Terracotta horse. Han or Six Dynasties.
— *Musée Cernuschi. Photo, Gauthier*

ornament. It was enough if their construction, silhouette, and general movement recalled to the dead man the living, moving world. And it is this quality which the Han figurines possess to a remarkable degree. For the very reason that they are simplified to the utmost degree, nothing is left in them but one thing: in the animals, the characteristic attitude of the species; in the guardians of the tomb, the gesture of

defence or menace, exaggerated to the point of caricature; or, in the reproductions of objects, the general construction of buildings or utensils, consisting in a mere silhouette of its planes. At times this exclusive preoccupation with rendering the genius of a species produces miniature masterpieces, as, for instance, in a little seated dog in the Musée Cernuschi (Fig. 68).

The human figurines in Han funeral pottery and in that of the Six

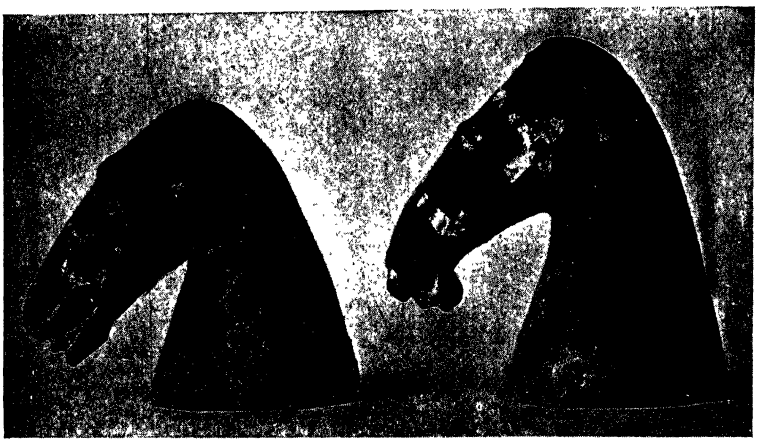


FIGURE 70
Terracottas. Han or Six Dynasties.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

Dynasties are often mere " dummies " with scarcely any modelling.[1] But often, too, while losing none of its simplicity, the statuette for that very reason achieves charm and elegance. This is often so of the figurines — certain of them of quite considerable proportions — representing young men or girls dressed in a sort of long kimono. On many of these dolls the kimono is cut out in a V-shape at the neck and falls to the ground in one sweeping curve, spreading out wide so as to conceal the feet. The sleeves, which are very broad at the wrist,

[1] Carl Hentze, op. cit., Fig. 21, 22, 23.

are also bell-shaped, so as to allow the person to conceal and cross the hands as though " in a muff." This unity and continuity of surface, which is no more nor less than the Han graphic convention

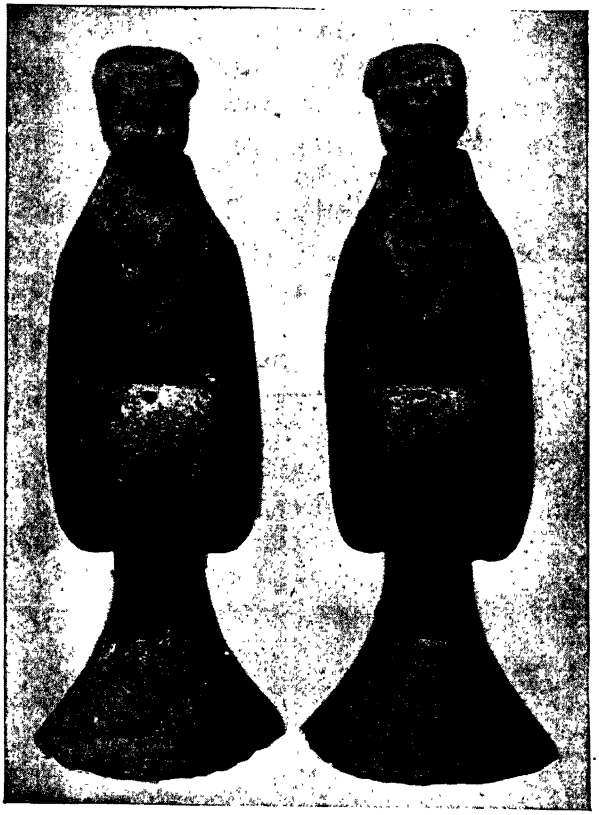


FIGURE 71
Terracotta figurines. Late Han or Six Dynasties.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

adapted to the laws of sculpture in the round, produces a similar result. The simple candour of these Chinese " choristers," as they have been called, their reserve, worthy of young novices, the charm

of their chubby little faces, heightened by their polychrome decoration, their conventionalization, and the flower-like droop of their ample robes, justify us in reckoning these works among the most pleasing productions of the art of the Far East[1] (Fig. 71).

To the same type of workmanship — sculpture in the round in a style admitting of no detail, but rude, highly simplified, and synthetic — belong the little animals in metal — for instance, the bears, represented as seated, with their front paws resting upon their knees — which are fairly frequent in European collections: the gilt bronze bear in the H. J. Oppenheim collection, London;[2] the three little gilt bronze bears ornamented with turquoise discovered by Mr. Umehara and his Japanese colleagues during their excavations at Rakuro, Korea, and now in the Seoul Museum;[3] the gilt bronze bear sitting upon its haunches, in the Stoclet collection, Brussels;[4] the great bear in gilt bronze recently acquired by Monsieur David-Weill, a wonderfully balanced piece of sculpture in the round, etc. We may note that in this beast Han art found one of the subjects that suited it best, Han simplification excelling in the rendering of the compact form of the bear and the well-co-ordinated movement of this heavy but agile mass (Fig. 72, 73).

At times the pure, impetuous line of Han art, when transposed into

[1] There are many specimens of these. See Carl Hentze, op. cit., Fig. 25–9 (those in the Cologne Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, New York, the Wannieck and Deslouy collections, the Hentze collection, and the Victoria and Albert Museum); Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Fig. 76 (Toronto Museum); *Eumorfopoulos Collection . . . Pottery*, I, Pl. XX, Fig. 113, 114.

[2] *Catalogue de l'Exposition d'art oriental* (Paris, 1925), Pl. VII. See M. Vignier's remarks in "*L'Exposition d'art oriental*," *Revue des arts asiatiques*, June 1925, p. 7: "The animal is represented as seated in an attitude of sly good humour. . . . The intense vitality which emanates from it is not due to any particular striving after realism. It is fairly obvious that the artist who conceived this beast was far more concerned with constructing an architectural mass than with minutely indicating the typical characteristics which lend it individuality. He has but to suggest its volume and inward life — to give us, as it were, a plastic and a psychological hint — and our mind finishes carrying out his idea of its own accord."

[3] Umehara: "*Découvertes archéologiques en Corée*," *Revue des arts asiatiques*, March 1926, Pl. XI.

[4] O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin 1929, *Catalogue*, Fig. 32, p. 60.

terms of sculpture in the round, produces masterpieces of elegance in bronze, as we have seen above that it did in terracotta. We may mention the famous leopard — either a perfume-burner or a vase-stand — in bronze inlaid with silver, about four and a half inches high, in the Stoclet collection (Fig. 74);[1] besides the two-headed dragon, quite in the same style, in the David-Weill collection, in which the long, coiling

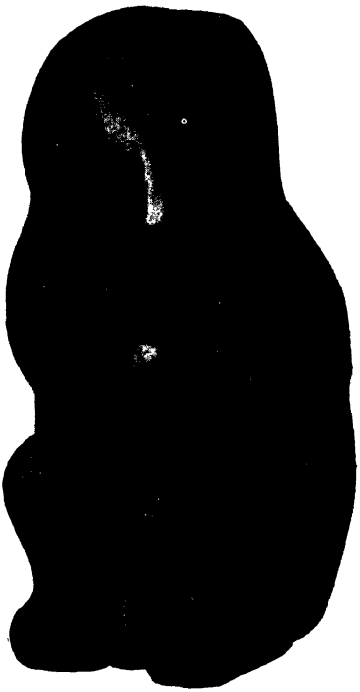


FIGURE 72
Gilt bronze bear.
— *H. J. Oppenheim collection.*
By courtesy of Monsieur Oppenheim

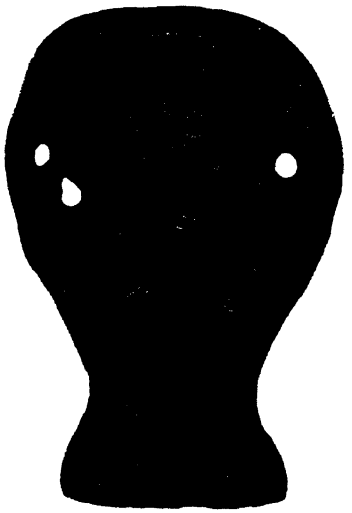


FIGURE 73
Small bronze bear (enlarged).
— *Musée Guimet*

body, with the curious rhythm of its line, ends at both extremities in an elegant feline head darting out in serpentine fashion.

This simplification of sculpture in the round is in harmony with what we said above about the reliance on pure quality of line in the

[1] D'Ardenne de Tizac: *Les Animaux dans l'art chinois*, Pl. XVI; and O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin 1929, *Catalogue*, Fig. 68, p. 55.

decorative subjects of Han bronzes or the figures in the relief of that school. In either of these categories the artist's attention is concentrated upon rendering the movement, and the movement alone, of the being or subject represented, by means of simplicity of line or form. By comparison with the purely metaphysical canons of art of the Chóu period, this method is no doubt realistic, but it is a realism of movement and not of form. Human or animal form is here only a means, not an end. It is meant to indicate only the genius of the species, the generic type of movement of the creature under observation. Hence its swift elegance. It has not yet won the right to linger over itself, over the play of muscles and the plastic value of individual characteristics. It is not till the T'ang period that we see the appearance of those touches of virtuosity and expansiveness which betray a secret slowing down of the inward dynamic power.

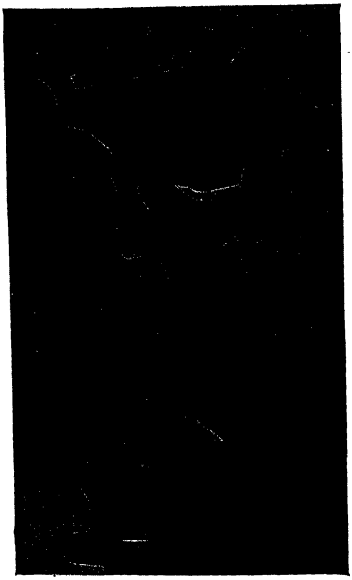


FIGURE 74
Perfume-burner.
— *Stoclet collection. By courtesy of M. Stoclet*

THE CHIN (TSIN) PERIOD AND THE SIX DYNASTIES

FOR FOUR CENTURIES ON END, EXCEPT FOR ONE BRIEF INTERRUPTION, the Han dynasty had maintained imperial order in China, and Chinese order in central Asia. At the end of the second century of our era, in 184, it was shaken by a popular movement of neo-Taoist inspiration, that of the Yellow Caps. The revolt having been crushed, military leaders such as the tyrant Tung Cho (189–192) and after-

wards the " mayor of the palace " Ts'ao Ts'ao (196–220) established themselves at the Emperor's side and governed in his name. Ts'ao Ts'ao's son deposed the Han dynasty and founded a new imperial house, that of the Wei, which reigned over northern China from 220

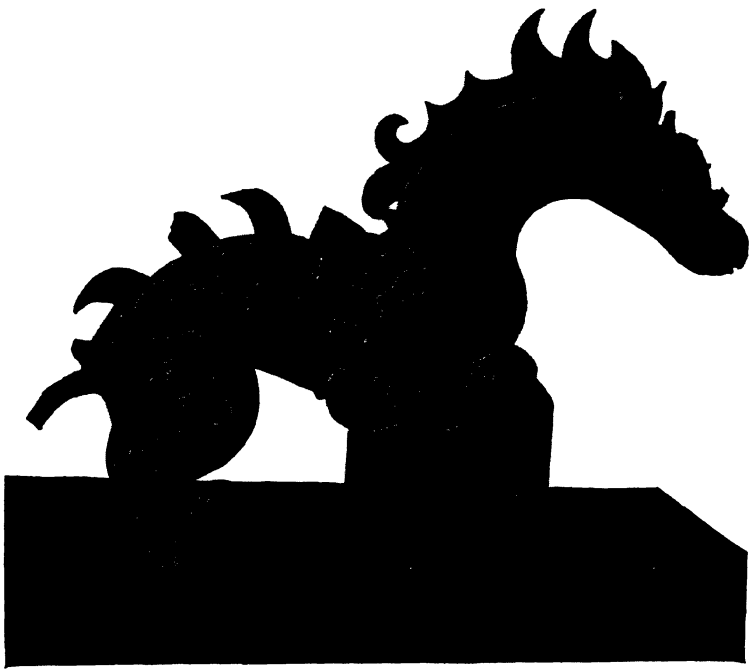


FIGURE 75

Bronze dragon. Ch'in (Ts'in), or more probably Han.
— *Stoclet collection. By courtesy of M. Stoclet*

to 265. During this time another Chinese kingdom, that of Wu, was founded in the south-east, where it governed from 222 to 280, while a last branch of the Han dynasty lingered on in Ssŭ-ch'uan from 221 to 264. This is what is known as the period of the Three Kingdoms, which was full of heroic combats and legendary exploits. Next, in 280, a new dynasty, that of the Chin (Tsin), united China once

more. But at the opening of the fourth century began the great invasions. From the year 304 onwards Hun or Turco-Mongol hordes established themselves in the whole of China to the north of the Yellow River and even as far as Shen-si and Ho-nan. During this time the Chinese sovereigns took refuge behind the barrier of the Blue River and there maintained a national empire of the south, which the Sino-Tatars of the north never succeeded in conquering.

These dynasties of the south, which alone are reckoned as imperial dynasties, because they were purely Chinese, were five in number: the Chin (Tsin), who had taken refuge in Nankin after the conquest of the north by the Tatars and ruled from 317 to 420, the Sung (Liu Sung), who reigned from 420 to 479, the Ch'i (Ts'i), from 479 to 502, the Liang, from 502 to 557, and the Ch'en, from 557 to 589. By a curious misnomer, the period lasting from 280, or 420, to 589 is none the less known as the period of the " Six Dynasties," two little dynasties of the north being added to the four last dynasties of the south.

While southern China thus formed a native empire, the various ephemeral kingdoms founded in the north by the Turco-Mongol hordes were unified by one of these, the T'o-pa, of Turkish or Mongol origin. In the course of the fifth century the T'o-pa princes founded a great Sino-Tatar kingdom, that of the Wei, who extended their sway as far as the region towards the Yang-tse. This kingdom lasted as a unitary state till 535, and afterwards under two rival branches till about 550. We shall see later how important the Wei kingdom was in the formation of Chinese Buddhist art.

From the historical point of view, then, the period of the Chin (Tsin) and the Six Dynasties is one of political instability, upheaval, and violence, an era of incessant pronunciamentos and barbarian invasions. Internally no trace of the order and peace of the Han age seemed to be left. Chinese society seemed to have plunged back into the

desperate struggles of the Chóu period, aggravated by the fact that, whereas during the incessant wars of the "contending states" the continuity of the various feudal dynasties had been assured, now, on the contrary, the dynasties lasted for scarcely more than twenty

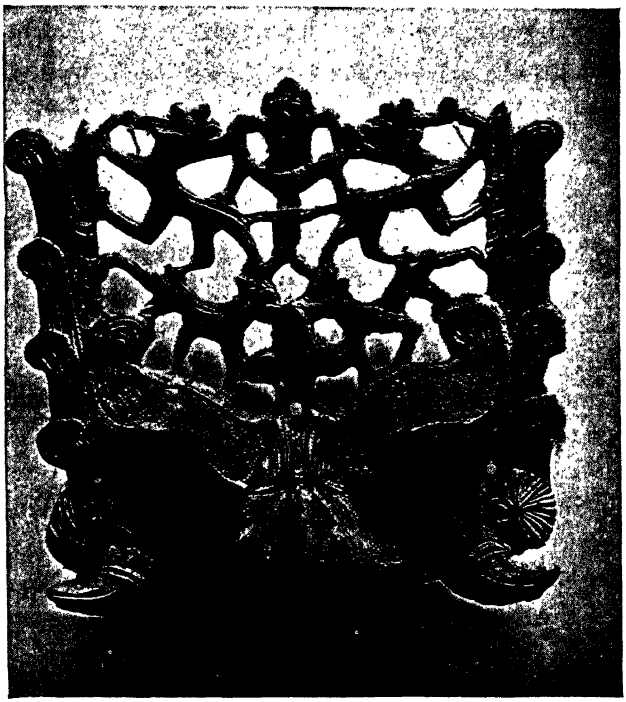


FIGURE 76
Bronze mask of a *t'ao-t'ieh*. Han period.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

or thirty years before they were swept away by new military adventurers. And moral unrest, marked first by Taoist speculations and afterwards by Buddhist monasticism, went hand in hand with the instability of the State. Things were even worse in the north. The Chao Huns, who had swooped down upon Shen-si, and the Sien-pi

tribe of the Tunguses, who had established themselves at Pe-chih-li, were utter barbarians, at once brutal and perverted, whose history, as related in the national annals, recalls the darkest pages of French history under the Merovingians.

To sum up, after the order and peace of the Han dynasty, the Six Dynasties mark a return to the convulsions of the Chóu and Ch'in periods, aggravated by all the violence of the barbarian invasions.

It is this very character that Monsieur Charles Vignier has discerned in the art of the period, by a simple examination of the works, without any preconceived ideas based upon history. "With the Six Dynasties," he points out, "the somewhat cold order and classic symmetry of the Han period disappear. Art seems to revert to the flamboyant, intricate, unsymmetrical, and paroxysmal conventions of the Ch'in style." But "this sort of Ch'in renaissance which characterizes the Six Dynasties finds its full expression in animal subjects." For it was not for nothing that Han art had in the mean time developed a realistic treatment of animals. Hence "the arabesque style of the neo-Ch'in school was to express itself in animal forms." Instead of reverting to the intricately geometrical style of the Ch'in period, unsymmetrical in balance, and with a persistent derangement of the planes, we now find decorative motives of animals realistically and plastically treated, though still intricately entwined in savage strife. But here, too, in spite of the reaction which seemed to have swept the Han tradition entirely away, its lesson was not altogether lost, and Monsieur Vignier is able to point out on the small bronze objects of this period, and especially on the fibulæ and "sleeve-weights," "an unsymmetrical arrangement of the principal motives, constantly corrected by an arrangement of secondary arabesques which bring the design together" (Fig. 81).

There is a little fibula in the Pelliot collection in the Musée Guimet which entirely typifies these new values, though unfortunately it is difficult to photograph. On it the Han dragons, with their pure, slen-

der line, twist and coil intricately in and out of one another in an unsymmetrical yet balanced design with a rhythm full of strength and vibrant energy (Fig. 77).

This reversion to a type of mind violent to the verge of the mon-



FIGURE 77

Fibulæ. Six Dynasties, showing transition from the Han to the T'ang style. — *Musée Guimet. Pelliot donation*

strous is so complete that it ends by subordinating Han realism to its own qualities. The horses' heads of grey clay which had no doubt already appeared under the Han dynasty,[1] but became very numerous during the period of the Six Dynasties — see, in particular, the

[1] A similar head has actually been found in a tomb together with Han coins (see O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin 1929, *Catalogue*, Fig. 131, p. 76); though on the other hand, as Professor Pelliot points out, it is true that coins of the Han type are most often found in connexion with the Six Dynasties too.

Eumorfopoulos collection[1] — have a snarl and a pose of the neck suggestive of a sort of savage mood of revolt which is quite foreign to true Han classicism (Fig. 69–70). We may express this tendency by saying that in these works the soul that inspired the Chóu and Ch'in ideals of art is here embodied in the realistic forms of the Han school. Equally characteristic is the animal with lowered head about to charge — perhaps a three-horned " rhinoceros " — also of grey

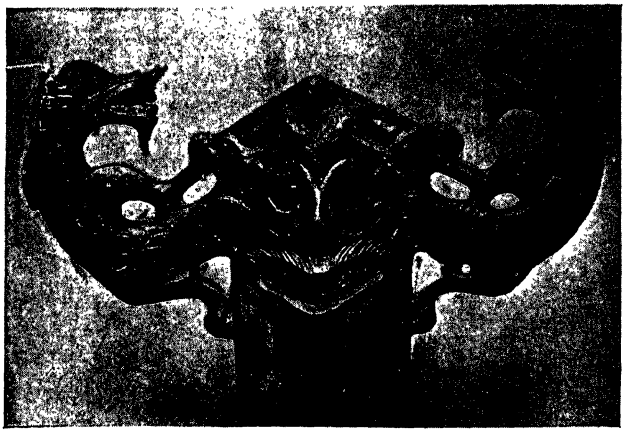


FIGURE 78
Han sabre-guard.
— *Louvre. Photo, C. T. Loo*

clay, in the Eumorfopoulos collection.[2] This upsetting of the plastic conventions of the Han school by the " neo-Ch'in " unrest of the Six Dynasties (cf. Fig. 76 and 78) is likewise exemplified in a number of mirrors of this date adorned with dragons and figures drawn from Taoist mythology,[3] in which the dragon is a sort of wild beast with the coils of a saurian, singularly realistic in form for such an imaginary creature; while the Taoist figures reflect the plastic ideals of

[1] Hobson's *Catalogue*, I. No. 125, Pl. XVII; 126, Pl. XXI.
[2] Ibid., I, No. 128, Pl. XVII.
[3] *Documents de la collection Sirén, Ars Asiatica*, VII, Pl. XVI (Stockholm Museum); reproduced in Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 120.

Han classicism in a heavier and more squat form, but with heightened power and relief; and, finally, the architectural disposition of the ornament inevitably preserves the symmetry usual in the treatment of mirrors. Yet we have only to compare the rather barbarous heaviness, the very confusion of the motives on these mirrors, with the ordered treatment of the Han mirrors, cold and severe almost to the point of bareness, to understand what an unrest has come over Chinese ideals of art.

Thus under the Six Dynasties the advance in realism marked by the animal sculpture of the Han period merely consisted in applying the geometrical intricacies of the Ch'in style to animal subjects treated in an increasingly plastic spirit. For the often striking originality of these works lies in the combination of a retrograde or archaistic intricacy in the motives with an increase of muscular vigour in the form and of a plastic virtuosity directly foreshadowing the approach of the naturalism of the T'ang period, in which the muscles are treated with an exaggerated parade of strength. The effect is often powerful, especially on the little inlaid bronzes reproduced by Sirén: [1] for instance, the heads of staves, adorned with horns and claws, which are to be seen in the Louvre, the dragon-shaped fibulæ in the Oppenheim collection; and even more so on the round bronze disks, known as " sleeve-weights," on top of which a struggling mass of beasts and dragons heaves itself into a conical form. Several of these, from the Stoclet, H. Rivière, J. Sauphar, and Sirén collections, and from the Berlin Museum, are reproduced by Monsieur Sirén [2] (Fig. 81); on these we may see a direct reversion to the clash of unbridled forces familiar in pre-Han days. It is true that these forces

[1] Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 114, Fig. A and D.

[2] Ibid., II, Pl. 117, Fig. C, D, E, F. A specimen of this art in the East Asiatic section of the Berlin Museum is maintained to be Han by Dr. Otto Kümmel, in his Catalogue of the *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin 1929, No. 67, p. 55. Other works of the same style, winged monsters in gilt bronze or grey limestone, belonging to the Octave Homberg and David-Weill collections, will be found in Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century*, I, Pl. 14, Fig. B, C, D.

are no longer symbolized by the zigzag lines and explosions of geometrical force of the earlier works, but are bodies of lions, dragons, or monsters more or less based upon reality. But here realism is merely a pretext and a basis. Contorted animal forms have taken the place of the "lines of force" of the earlier works, with their abrupt angles, but, though these abstract forms have taken on concrete shape, the sense of tension remains the same. In either case we have an art inspired by force alone, and highly suggestive for the study of the



FIGURE 79
Dragon. Six Dynasties.
— *Sauphar collection*



FIGURE 81
Bronze. Six Dynasties.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

permanent trend and continuous development of the Chinese æsthetic ideal; for these masses of muscle crushing one another, and these jaws devouring one another, recall, it is true, the old archaic monsters; while the long, twisting lines and heaving coils, which seem as though they might fly apart at any moment and lash out in a movement of revolt, or these snarling jowls full of rage and hatred, are all borrowings from realism rather than direct copies from nature, and so end by producing an effect similar to that of the ancient *t'ao-t'ieh;* yet, on the other hand, we see in these works the inception of

the purely muscular plastic convention of the T'ang period. It is through the writhing monsters and feline beasts of the Six Dynasties that we pass from the cult of pure outline and the plane surface that distinguishes the Han period, with its elegant simplicity and living line, to the full-bodied realism and exaggerated muscles of the T'ang animal-sculptors, with their anatomy based upon a balance of masses (Fig. 79 and 80).

What is more, these conclusions are confirmed by the sculpture in the round on a large scale of the Six Dynasties. This sculpture is in



FIGURE 80
Bronze. Six Dynasties.
— *Sauphar collection*

fairly direct descent from that of the corresponding category in the Han period — that is, of the only specimens of this which have come down to us: the animals on the tomb of Ho Ch'ü-ping. The Okura Museum, Tokyo, possesses a limestone statue of a lion about 3 feet 7½ inches high, attributed to the period of the Three Kingdoms,[1] the massive and even lumpy simplicity of whose contours reminds us of the Ho Ch'ü-ping figures. The same heaviness may be remarked, near Nankin, in a winged monster on the tomb of the emperor Wen-ti, of the first Sung dynasty, who died in 453. But

[1] Reproduced in Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, I, Pl. 1.

though this mass appears somewhat formless and stumpy at first sight, it none the less rears its head with a savage pride expressive of unusual power.[1]

In the sixth century sculpture in stone at last rises to the level of great art under the Liang dynasty. We still find the same funeral



FIGURE 82
Colossal monster. Liang period (518).
— *Photo, Segalen, Lartigue and de Voisins*

statues of very considerable dimensions, as much as ten feet in length, representing monsters and lions. The winged lions which guard the tombs of Hsiao Hsiu and Hsiao Tan, brothers of the Liang emperor Wu-ti, who both died in 518, at the village of Kan-yu-hsiang, near Nankin, are masterpieces at once of Chinese sculpture on a large scale and of the art of the Six Dynasties: [2] of Chinese sculpture on a

[1] Ibid., I, Pl. 3.

[2] Ibid., I, Pl. 4, 6, 9, 10.

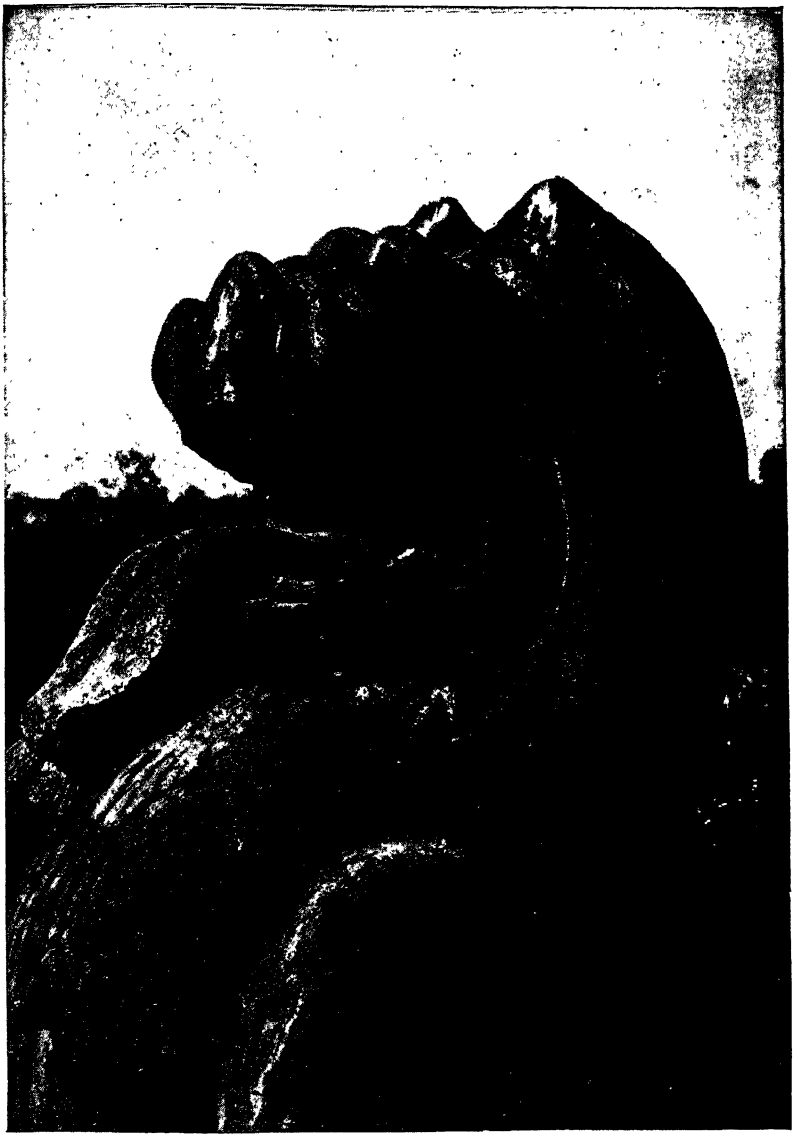


FIGURE 83

Liang monster. Head (518).

— *Photo, Segalen, Lartigue and de Voisins*

large scale because in them this class of work, which had hitherto been so formless and lumpy, suddenly comes to life at the prompting of an inward force; and the reason for this is precisely that the tumultuous soul of the Six Dynasties has breathed animation into the heavy material. With their formidable jaws, from which lolls an outstretched tongue, with their heads thrown backwards and their breasts protruding like the prow of a ship, with their front paws arched as if for the spring and the proud menace of their whole front quarters, these fantastic beasts recall the old art of terror inspired by Chóu and Ch'in art through a different technique, style, and art (Fig. 82–83). Nothing could justify more strikingly the epithet of "neo-Chóu" and "neo-Ch'in" applied by Monsieur Vignier to the art of the Six Dynasties.

Indeed, no less a cause than the turbulent conditions under the Six Dynasties could have succeeded in infusing life into this statuary on a large scale and raising it to a higher power. For so soon as the unrest of this period of "storm and stress" was reduced to order under the imperial régime of the T'ang dynasty, the great funeral statues lost their animating force. All that is left on the T'ang tombs, as we shall see below, is a parade of realism. Whatever may be said, these statues were originally due to an epic inspiration, though they ended by degenerating into an empty display of theatrical violence, verging on caricature. Realism became mere bombast and ended in the clogging heaviness of the Sung period, in which its original qualities were swamped.[1]

All that we have just said applies to the evolution of the Chinese æsthetic canon under the Six Dynasties. But suddenly forms and types make their appearance, among both the small bronze objects and the funeral terracottas, which are foreign to these developments,

[1] For the ceramics of the Six Dynasties and its relation to the Han and T'ang styles, see the excellent studies of Mr. Hobson, entitled "Pottery of the Six Dynasties," in the *Burlington Magazine* for July, August, and September 1928.

being no longer intricate and tormented, but, on the contrary, straightforward and rude in their simplicity, or else with a tendency to equally simple elongated forms reminiscent of Gothic. The reason for this is that Turco-Mongol tribes had invaded the north of China, and that the T'o-pa, or kings of Wei, settled there for good, and for a time imposed upon their domains their own temperament and conceptions, which were utterly foreign to Chinese taste.

Monsieur Charles Vignier has presented us with a fibula from his collection, with a little figure leaping upon a galloping horse, one hand resting upon the croup and the other holding the reins, as the man turns half-way round in his saddle. There is nothing in the stiff simplicity of this figure that recalls the experience of China's past. Such a rider might have been found in any other corner of Eurasia — even, for example, on the borders of Parthia.[1] Similarly, the terracotta foot-soldiers, horsemen, noble ladies, and mounted female figures yielded up by the Wei tombs reveal in their different fashion the irruption of a new canon of art, which might almost belong to a different order of beings. I am not merely referring to the little mounted figures, of a highly simplified nature, in the Koechlin [2] and Eumorfopoulos [3] collections, representing barbarian warriors wearing a helmet or a cap, and with their bodies entirely covered by a great cloak, mounted on a standing horse, which is likewise fully caparisoned (Fig. 84, 85). I am thinking in particular of the large terracottas in the European collections, which are more characteristic of this style. In these we find as a rule very elongated faces of an extremely aristocratic and elegant austerity, with an indefinably

[1] A similar fibula is to be found in the collection of Mme E. Rosenheim, of Berlin (O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin, 1929, *Catalogue*, Fig. 124, Pl. 74). I do not know why this fibula was exhibited by its owner — even with the prudent "*sogenannt* (so-called)" — as being "Scythian" in style. Its frank simplicity seems to me to be poles apart from Scythian contortions and convolutions.

[2] "*Les Collections de M. Raymond Koechlin*," in *L'Amour de l'art*, March 1925, p. 102, Fig. 3.

[3] Hobson: *Catalogue*, I, Pl. XX, Fig. 118.

Gothic suggestion (cf. Fig. 86). The horses, which resemble the palfreys and ambling horses of mediæval art, are tall chargers with long, slender heads and swanlike necks, and forequarters noticeably



FIGURE 84
Wei terracotta.
— *Musée Cernuschi. Photo, Gauthier*

taller than their hind quarters. The mediæval impression is heightened by their rich caparisons, with saddle-cloths hanging almost down to the ground, recalling the knights of the ancient orders of chivalry

in western Europe.[1] On these steeds, so different from the ancient Chinese war-horses, the aristocratic horsewomen of the Wei period, distinguished by their long, drooping sleeves and robes, bear themselves with an austere and haughty elegance suggestive rather of

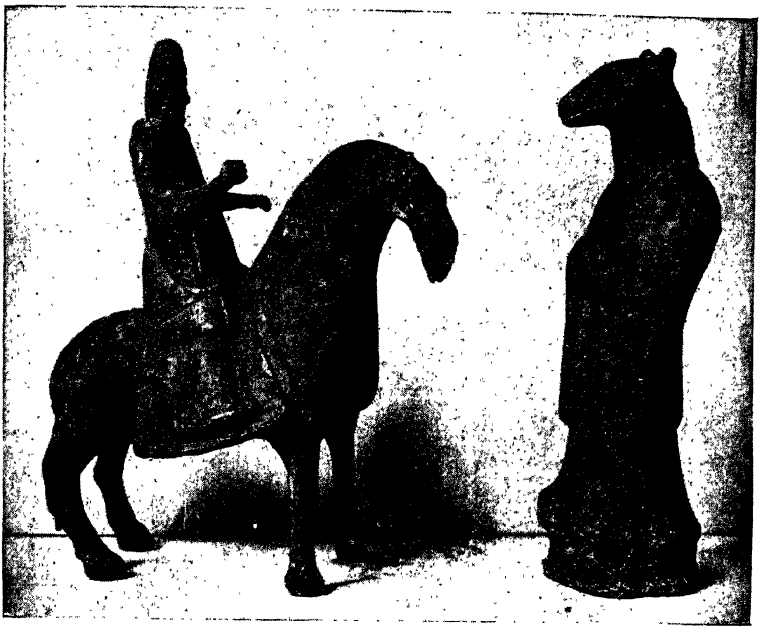


FIGURE 85
Wei terracottas.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

mediæval European heroines than of the usual doll-like figures of the Chinese world of pleasure.[2]

The standing female statuettes of the Wei period represented in

[1] C. Hentze: *Chinese Tomb Figures*, Pl. 53; O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin, 1929, *Catalogue*, Fig. 278 (Yamanaka collection) and 279 (Guttmann collection, Potsdam).

[2] Statuette about eleven inches high in the Eumorfopoulos collection, reproduced by C. Hentze, op. cit., Pl. 50. Also the little drummer near it in the Eumorfopoulos *Catalogue*, ed. Hobson, I, Pl. XXI, Fig. 120.

the Sirén, Wannieck, Haase, T. Simon, L. Jaffé, and Eumorfopoulos collections have the same "mediæval" and "Gothic" qualities — though be it noted that I use these words purely to suggest an analogy



FIGURE 86
Wei terracottas.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

and with no ethnical or cultural connotation. Their head-dress is sometimes a sort of hennin in the form of a truncated cone, sometimes a sort of horned mitra, and with the straight folds of their robes they,

too, have a tall, austere, virile elegance which, in spite of the resemblance in fashion, seems to be in complete antithesis to the mannered elegance of the roll of Ku K'ai-chih.[1] Even when these severe ladies of the aristocracy condescend to assume a more ornate costume — as, for instance, the two ladies in the Eumorfopoulos collection [2] wearing lotus-flowers or " flowers of longevity " — their gesture, with its attempt at preciosity, their heads, drooping in an attitude of studied grace, their fuller dress with its very ample sleeves and wide scarves, in no way diminish the severe solidity of the general conception. And not all the more substantial yet very imposing luxury of the seated noblewoman in the David-Weill collection [3] can hide the fact that here we have one of those formidable Wei princesses, like the terrible regent Hu (who died in 528), in whom feminine charm was overpowered by virile energy.[4]

The Wei warriors found in the tombs belong to the same race. There is no doubt that, in accordance with the well-grounded theory of Professor Pelliot, they represent the first appearance of the genuinely Turco-Mongol element (not Tungusian, as had previously been supposed) in the affairs of the Far East. The Wei terracottas are not calculated to upset this hypothesis. Whether they are horsemen, such as the figures in the Koechlin and Eumorfopoulos collections to which we referred above, and the group in the Royal Museum, Toronto, reproduced by Professor Sirén,[5] all of which are represented as sitting upright in the saddle and forming a single whole with their

[1] O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin, 1929, *Catalogue*, Fig. 262 (T. Simon collection), 263 (L. Jaffé collection), 264 (T. Simon collection); C. Hentze: *Chinese Tomb Figures*, Fig. 46 (Sirén and Wannieck collections), 47 (Haase collection), 49 (Sirén collection); *Eumorfopoulos collection, Catalogue*, ed. Hobson, I, XXI, 124; Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 110 (Burchard collection).

[2] *Catalogue*, ed. Hobson, II, Pl. XIX, Fig. 111–12.

[3] Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 112.

[4] With these Wei figurines may be compared the figures representing women from the Korean tombs of the sixth century. See Eckardt: *History of Korean Art*, Pl. I and Fig. 254.

[5] *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 109.



FIGURE 87
Tartar warrior. Wei period.
— *Musée Guimet and Vignier collection*

mount,[1] or foot-soldiers, such as those in the last-named museum, the Musée Guimet, and the Vignier collection (Fig. 87), or in the Guttmann, Haase, and Wannieck collections,[2] what we have here are not Chinese types, nor do they quite conform to the native canons of art. Wearing a sort of helmet cap well pulled down on the head in such a way as to cover the ears and nape of the neck, close-fitting jerkins of *cuir bouilli* shaped like a corselet, and long, full breeches, and protected by a rectangular shield adorned with a figure of a monster, they are indeed the true forerunners of the Turkish hordes which were so often to overrun Asia. They are a warning that the day of Chinese China was now at an end, and that in future the Chinese æsthetic ideal would no longer be able to follow its own independent course. We have now arrived at the age of foreign influences, that of the Turco-Mongol nations in the political sphere, that of Buddhism

[1] There is a well-known wine-jar in the form of a mounted warrior, discovered by Mr. Umehara in a tomb near Kyongtju in Korea, belonging to the Silla school, of the fourth–seventh centuries, which in spite of its squatness, which is foreign to Wei art, may be compared with this equestrian group of mounted figures in its un-Chinese stiffness and "mediæval" character. Reproduced in Eckhardt, op. cit., Fig. 361.

[2] Carl Hentze, op. cit., Pl. 43, 44, 45.

in the religious sphere, and that of Indian, Hellenic, and Iranian influences in the sphere of art.

THE ART OF THE STEPPES: MINUSSINSK AND NOÏN-OLA

To complete the history of Chinese art in the pre-Buddhist period it is only fitting that we should append a few remarks on the art of the nomad populations of northern and central Asia before the coming of Buddhism.

These populations were of various races. Some, who occupied what is now Mongolia and Manchuria, were connected with the Altaic family, still represented by the Turks, Mongols, and Tunguses, which gave rise during the period of antiquity and the early Middle Ages to the Hsiung-nu, or Huns, of whose existence in the Far East we have evidence from the third century B.C. to the fourth century of our era;[1] the Avars, who held sway over Mongolia in the fifth century; the Ephthalites, who reigned over Turkestan and Bactria about the same time; and, lastly, the T'u-kiue, or Turks proper, whose domination over northern and central Asia extends from the sixth to the eighth century.

There were also peoples of different races inhabiting the western steppes at the same time as these Turco-Mongols. Some belonged to the Iranian race, others to a different branch of the family — the Tokharian — speaking languages cognate with our own; but in either case they were Indo-Europeans. Above all, with this branch of the Indo-European family domiciled in central Asia were connected the Scythians and Sarmatians who succeeded one another on the steppes of southern Russia and were Iranians,[2] the Sogdians and the Saka or

[1] See Zoltan de Takacs: "*Huns et Chinois*," in the review *Turan*, Budapest, 1918, 5.

[2] On the Scythian and Sarmatian art, properly so called, of southern Russia, see E. H. Minns: *Scythians and Greeks* (Cambridge, 1913); and Rostovzev: *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia* (Oxford, 1922).

Sacæ in the two Turkestans, who were also Iranians; though the Iranians who had remained settled in Iran proper called these outlying connexions, who had remained half-nomad and had therefore become their enemies, by the hostile name of Turanians.

As a matter of fact, the distinguishing factor between one people and another is not so much race as habitat or conditions of existence.

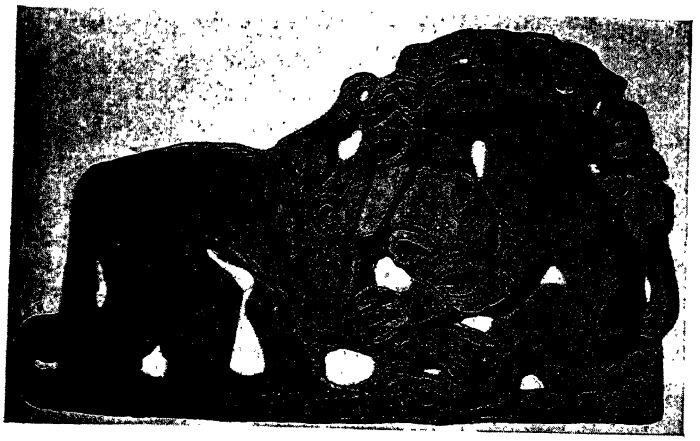


FIGURE 88
Siberian gold plaque.
— *Hermitage Museum*

Whether Turco-Mongols or Indo-Europeans, most of the peoples of central and northern Asia, as we have said, were nomad or semi-nomad, with the exception of the settled populations, speaking either Tokharian or east Iranian languages, in the oases of Kashgaria, of whom we shall have more to say below in connexion with Buddhism in central Asia. Partaking as they did in a common life, they also possessed common modes of artistic expression. Thus an art arose for which such names have been proposed as "Turanian," "Scythian," "Scytho-Sarmatian," "Altaic," etc., all of which terms are inaccurate, since they seem to ascribe to one or other of these peoples

what was really the work of them all. It would be more correct to call it by the more modest name of "the art of the steppes." On the other hand, attempts have been made to explain the formation of the Chinese æsthetic ideal by the influence of this art, almost before it had assumed its own definitive form; and, again, a contrary theory has tried, in turn, to derive it from that ideal. It is surely better, as



FIGURE 89
Bronze plaque.
— *Stoclet collection. By courtesy of M. Stoclet*

Monsieur Vignier has most wisely proposed,[1] that the art of the steppes, as found alike on the Cimmerian Bosporus (between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov), the Caucasus, and the borders of Iran and Turkestan, in Siberia and in Mongolia, is an art apart, which, though in no way original, is radically opposed, both in temperament and in technique, to the Chinese æsthetic ideal.

Moreover, it is admitted even by the champions of the Scytho-Sarmatian theory that the origin of this art should be sought, not in China, but rather in the direction of Iran and Mesopotamia. The

[1] Charles Vignier: "*L'Aventureux Art scythe*," in *Arêthuse*, April 1925, pp. 56–63.

motive of the heraldic beast, which Achæmeno-Sāsānid Persia was to transmit and disseminate along every route leading across the steppes of Russo-Turkestan and those inhabited by the peoples of Altaic race, is to be sought in the most ancient traditions of Chaldeo-Assyrian gem-engraving. If we turn over the pages of Delaporte's catalogues of the collections of Sumero-Akkadian, Babylonian, and Sargonid cylinders in the Louvre, we shall find on them the griffons, eagles, and eagle-shaped monsters pulling down beasts of the deer tribe, the groups of fantastic wild beasts, symmetrically arranged and serving as a link between ibex or beasts of the taurine tribe, and at times even the backward curl of the nostril so dear to the art of the steppes.

These heraldic motives, these conventionalized animal forms, these combats between decorative beasts, were handed down to Persia, together with Sargonid realism in the representation of animals, as part of the heritage of the Mesopotamian empires.[1] Persia in turn handed on scarcely anything to the northern nomads but this heraldic and conventionalized treatment of animals, with the addition of just so much realism as was necessary to bear this conventional treatment. Such a difference was a necessary outcome of the very conditions under which the nomads lived. Since they possessed neither permanent settlements nor luxurious buildings, the arts of architecture, statuary, and painting, which alone admit of realistic treatment, were foreign to them. Their sole luxury consisted in costume and gold-

[1] A decisive light has quite recently been thrown upon the origin of this type of art by the discovery of the "Luristan bronzes" (see article by Mr. Arthur Upham Pope in the *Illustrated London News* for January 10, 1931). A large part of these already celebrated bronzes, which were so brilliantly represented at the Persian Exhibition of 1931 in London, belong, as M. André Godard, Director of Persian Antiquities at the Louvre, has proved, to the Kassite period, between 1700 and 1100 B.C. Now, the Kassites were the advance-guard of the Indo-Iranians in Persia. And so we see how the conventionalized animal motive was first transmitted from the Chaldeans to the Indo-Iranians. The Kassites subsequently transmitted it in the same fashion to their brothers and neighbours the Medes, and the Medes handed it on in turn to their cousins the Scythians. For this highly important question I refer my readers to the forthcoming work by Messrs. Godard and Rostovzev.

smiths' work, personal jewellery, horses' trappings, and carpets. But objects of this kind — belt-hooks and plaques, scabbard- or harness-buckles, metal ornaments for chariots, not to speak of their carpets, which, except at Noïn-ola and in Kashgaria, have almost entirely disappeared — seem to be marked out for heraldic treatment. What is more, the northern nomads, whether Iranian or Turco-Mongol,

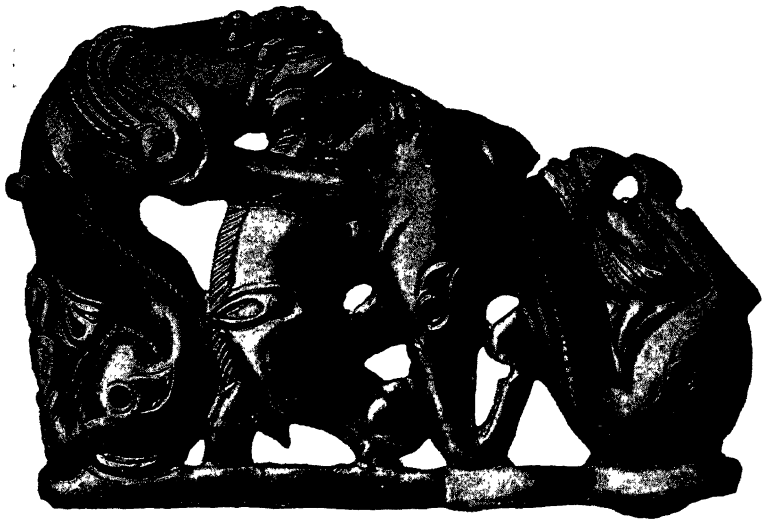


FIGURE 90
Siberian plaque.
— *Hermitage Museum*

passed their life on horseback, for, living as they did on the steppes, their time was spent in tracking down herds of deer or wild horses, during which they often saw attacks by wild beasts upon the animals as they grazed. It resulted naturally from the conditions of their life, as well as from the peculiar character of their luxury, that all that remained to them of the lessons of Chaldeo-Iranian art should have been heraldic motives and conventionally treated combats between animals. The "barbarian" art of the Goths and Scandinavians,

which drew upon the same elements in later days, was to develop them in a similar spirit.[1]

Having once established these principles, we have none the less to admit that in certain areas and during definite periods the heraldic and conventionalized animals produced by the art of the steppes did succeed, under certain influences, in showing a revival of realism.



FIGURE 91

Gilt bronze plaque.
— *Stoclet collection. By courtesy of M. Stoclet*

The establishment of a Greek, and afterwards of a Greco-Roman, kingdom in the region of the Cimmerian Bosporus was favourable to the creation of a Greco-Scythian, and afterwards of a Greco-Sarmatian, art, in which Hellenic artists placed their plastic methods at the service of subjects drawn from the life of the steppe. Signs of this Greek influence are perceptible, in spite of the conventionalized native style, in the famous Maikop girdle in the Hermitage, as well

[1] The art of the steppes was also carried from central Asia into central Europe by Attila's Huns and by the Avars of Hungary. See Zoltan de Takacs: "From Northern China to the Danube," *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, New Series, Year 6, Vol. VI, 1930, 278. For the pre-Hungarian art of the so-called "Keszthely civilization," and its connexion with the Far East, see other studies by Mr. Zoltan de Takacs in the *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, Vol. V, 142: "Some Irano-Hellenistic and Sino-Hunnic Art Forms."

as in the Bulgarian girdle in the British Museum.[1] On the other hand, I think a Persian or Greco-Persian influence, in some sort suggestive of the Tāq-i Bustān reliefs, can be discerned both in the Siberian plaque representing a boar-hunt reproduced in Rostovzev's various

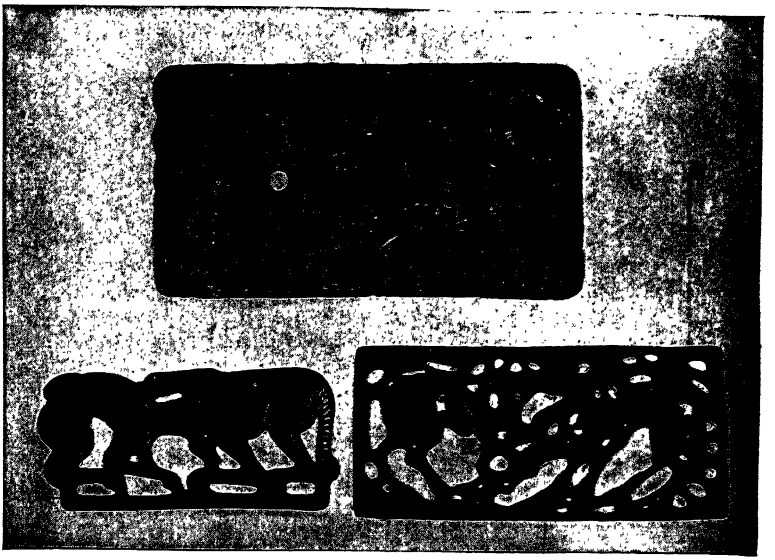


FIGURE 92

Bronze plaques.
— *Metropolitan Museum, New York, formerly in the Loo collection. Photo, C. T. Loo*

works [2] (cf. Fig. 90), and in the " ritual ax " in the Treasure of the Oxus in the British Museum, representing a wild goat being seized by a tiger, which is itself being charged by a wild boar.[3] But in general the art of the steppes, when left to itself, only admits of realism

[1] Borovka: *Scythian Art*, Fig. 46, B.

[2] Rostovzev: *Skythika, le Centre de l'Asie, la Russie, la Chine et le style animal*, Seminarium Kondakovianum, Prague, 1929, No. 54, Pl. X.

[3] Reproduced in Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, II, Pl. 19. I likewise see an absolutely direct Persian influence in several buckles from the Zaussailov collection, Helsingfors, reproduced by Rostovzev in *Skythika*, Pl. VI, Fig. 31–32, on which are pairs of confronted wild goats.

in very small works, such as the staff-mounts representing wild asses and hinds illustrated in Fig. 96–99, and even in these of a realism expressed by the most direct and simple devices and devoid of elaboration.

In almost all the other works of this school we find animals treated in accordance with a strictly geometrical convention, the sole motive

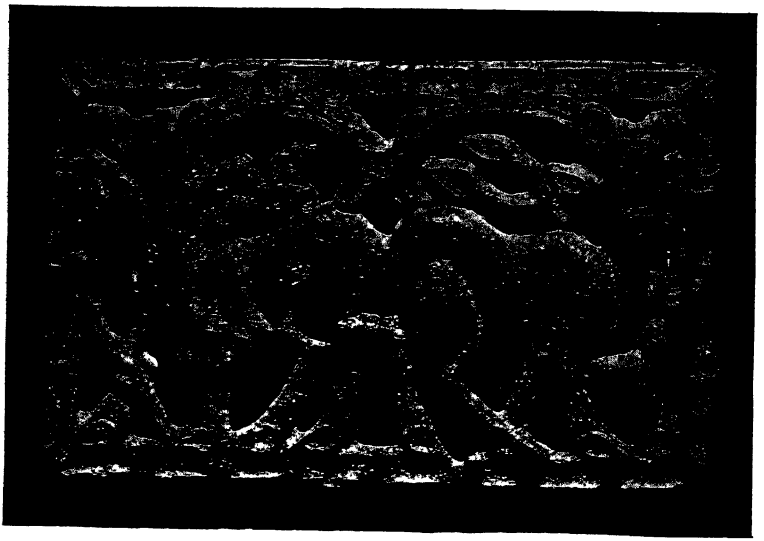


FIGURE 93
Plaque.
— *David-Weill collection. Photo, Wannieck*

of which is a decorative one. The antlers of the beasts of the deer tribe, the manes of the equine beasts, branch out into loops and spirals which make the animal almost as tall again [1] (Fig. 88, 92, 93, 95); while the upper lip of the equine beasts curls back in a corkscrew curve [2] (Fig. 88, 94). The conventionalization of the animal forms is often so complete, they are so thoroughly entwined and interlaced

[1] Borovka: *Scythian Art*, Pl. I, 22 B, 28, 34, 48, 49.
[2] There are very many examples. Borovka, op. cit., Fig. 48.

and branch out into such a wealth of extraneous growths, that, in spite of the consistently realistic treatment of the heads of these beasts, whether they be of the deer or of the horse tribe or wild beasts, it is quite difficult to distinguish the animal from the decoration.[1] The



FIGURE 94
Bronze plaque.
— *Sauphar collection*

horns and tails of the beasts end in foliage or grow into the form of birds (cf. Fig. 101). In this fashion we sometimes arrive at a dispersal of the animal elements which is at first sight somewhat analogous to that of Chóu art, though arrived at by quite different and even — if we examine them more closely — radically opposite means. In dispersing the component parts of the *t'ao-t'ieh* over the body of a vase Chóu art was moving towards realism; the *t'ao-t'ieh* lurked within the material like a principle of menace, and the tendency was towards a concretization of it.

[1] Rostovzev: *Skythika*, Pl. II, Fig. 4; Pl. IV, Fig. 15, 16; Borovka, op. cit., Fig. 70.

On the other hand, in these plaques produced by the art of the steppes we have once realistic elements which, by dint of intertwining with one another and branching out into extraneous growths, end by sinking and losing their own character in the ornament which they have created out of themselves (Fig. 91, 92).

Moreover, even if this art has a character which is opposed to the Chóu canon in that its geometrical quality is based upon a distortion

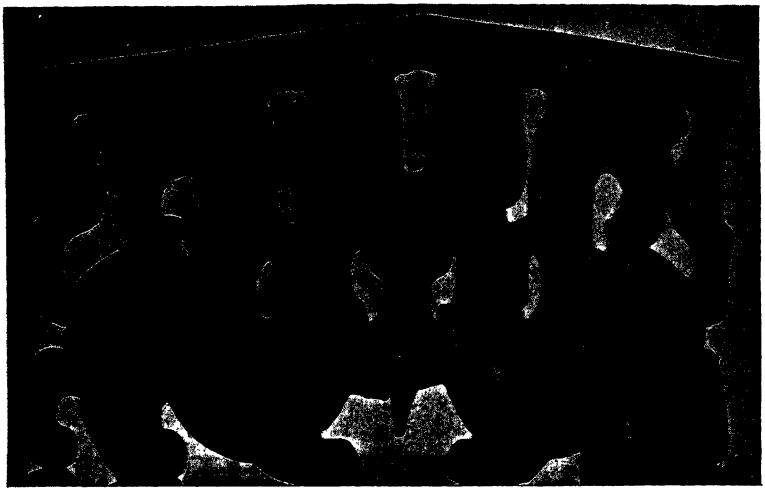


FIGURE 95
Bronze inlaid with silver.
— *Stoclet collection*

of realistic forms, it is also of an opposite nature to Han art in the very sphere in which attempts have been made to compare the two: that is, in dramatic hunting-scenes, or, rather, combats of animals. Nothing could be of a more opposite nature to the free, pure line of Han art, simplified to the point of bareness, than the contortions, convulsions, and involved lines of the art of the steppes. The Han scenes of this character showed beasts either *passant*, pursuing, or, at times, threatening one another, but in a simple and open setting.

Here, on the contrary, we have affrays between beasts locked together in a death-grip, and often as intricately intertwined as the undergrowth of a tropical forest. It is a dramatic art, delighting in crushed limbs — the body of the horse or deer in the clutches of the feline beast, bear, bird of prey, or griffon being often absolutely convulsed.[1]



FIGURE 96
Bronze animal of the deer tribe.
— *Sauphar collection*

There is no element of speed, no flight, as in the animal art of the Han period; but patient, methodical carnage, in which, as we have said, the victim often seems to be dragging his tormentor down to share his own death. But there is a dynamic inward impulse which, in spite of the slow-moving style, would soon rise to great tragic power were

[1] Borovka, op. cit., Fig. 46, 47, 70.

it not for the fact that the flamboyant conventionalization which causes the forms to branch out into intricate and florid designs generally deprives these sanguinary scenes of all their realism (Fig. 88, 89).

Thus the art of the steppes does not seem to have exercised the influence on the formation of ancient Chinese art which several

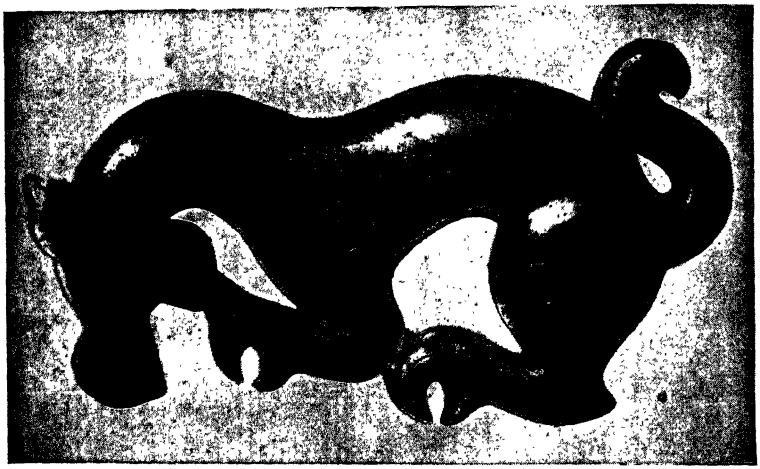
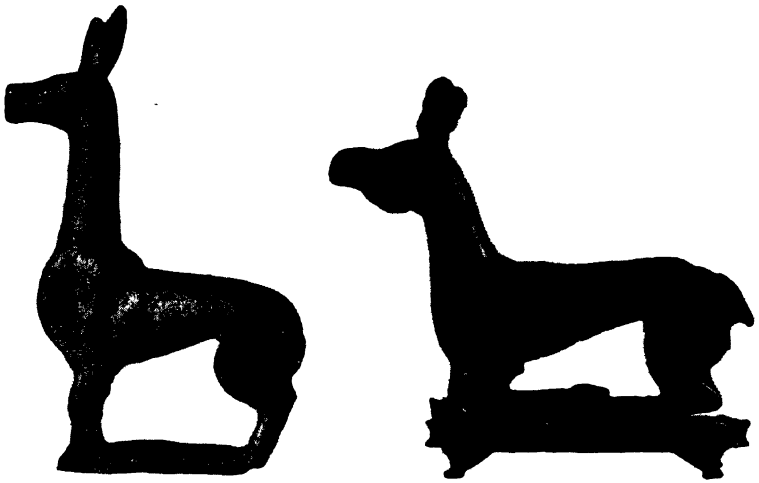


FIGURE 97
Bronze ornament.
— *Eumorfopoulos collection*

eminent authorities at first supposed it to have done. None the less, its influence extended to eastern Siberia and Mongolia, bordering directly upon China proper. An important centre of this art, remarkable for its bronze objects with conventionalized animal motives, has been found at Minussinsk, in the valley of the Yenisei.[1] Another was

[1] Borovka, op. cit., Fig. 53; Gero von Merhart: *Bronzezeit am Jenissei* (Vienna, 1926), particularly Pl. IX and X–XI. The Minussinsk bronzes have since been examined afresh by Professor Salmony, Director of the Oriental Museum, Cologne, during his archæological tour of Siberia in 1929–30. See his articles in *Die Kunstauktion*, continued as *Die Weltkunst* (Berlin), for August 31, December 14, June 22, July 27, and August 17, 1930 ("*Die Museen Sibiriens, Tomsk, Tschita, Minussinsk, Irkutsk, Krasnojarsk*").

discovered in 1924–5 by the Russian mission of Messrs. Kozlov, Teplukov, and Borovka at Noïn-ola, near Urga. The objects excavated by them came from the tombs of Hun chiefs and consisted of carpets, stuffs of wool and embroidered silk, coarse ceramic ware, bronze harness ornaments, lacquered wood, and one little jade figure. One of the stuffs (Fig. 102) represents in one part an eland being dragged



FIGURES 98, 99

Bronze animals of the deer tribe.

— *Vignier collection* — *C. T. Loo collection*

down by a griffon, and in another a yak attacked by a beast of the feline tribe — the usual themes of the steppe — the former being treated with some lingering traces of realism, so that Borovka is able to compare it with a gold plaque in the Hermitage which marks the precise transition from the Greek or Assyro-Iranian plastic style to the conventionalized method of the steppes.[1] The second design, on the contrary, representing a duel between some beast of the bovine tribe — a buffalo or a yak — and a fantastic beast of prey, bears every mark of conventionalization: arabesques occupying the empty

[1] Borovka, op. cit., Pl. 46, A.

spaces on the bodies of the animals, the mane and tail of the beast breaking out into secondary heads, etc.[1]

One particularly valuable point is that the Chinese works found with these objects enable us to establish the date of these tombs. Not

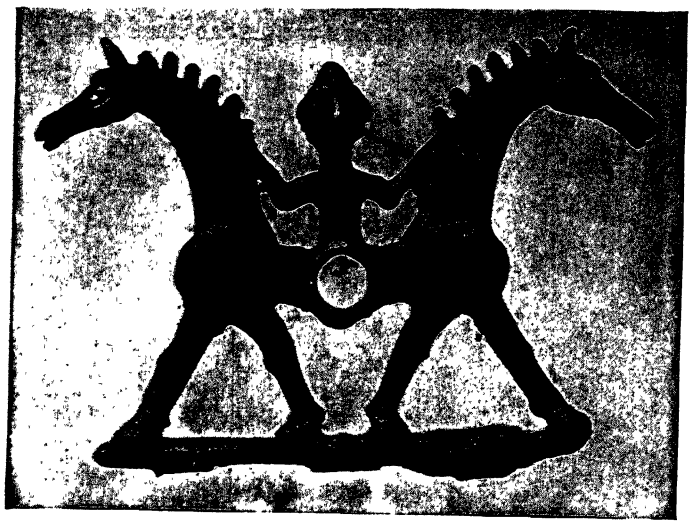


FIGURE 100
Bronze bit-ornament.
— *Vignier collection*

only do the lacquers, the jade, and the design on a bowl inform us that here we are in the Han period, but an inscription on a vase, which has been checked by Dr. Otto Kümmel, gives us an exact date: the year 11 of our era.[2]

Moreover, the presence on a bronze mirror in the "Siberian" style

[1] Ibid., Pl. 74.

[2] It can be seen that, even though the influence of the art of the steppes upon China proper seems to me smaller than certain authorities supposed for a time, the intrinsic importance of this art seems to me quite in accordance with the teaching of Professor Rostovzev. The discovery of the wonderful Luristan bronzes only goes to confirm his views. From the *Kassite* bronzes of Luristan to the *Hun* fabrics of Noïn-ola, the art of the steppes affirms its unity and power. All recent discoveries go to support the teaching of Messrs. Minns and Rostovzev.

of Si-hsia characters, which can date only from the eleventh to twelfth centuries,[1] shows that the art of the steppes lingered on on the

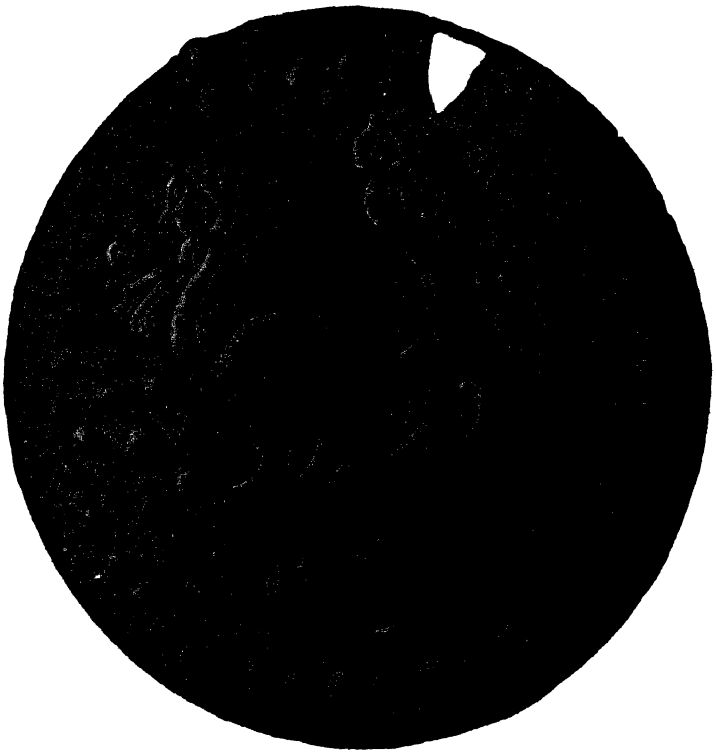


FIGURE 101
Bronze disk.
— *Sauphar collection*

northern borders of China up to the eve of the invasion by Jenghiz-Khan and his descendants.

If, then, the art of the steppes cannot have had any influence on the formation of Chinese art in antiquity, as has been believed, does

[1] Cf. Professor Pelliot's lecture of May 2, 1927.



FIGURE 101b
Bronze plaque.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

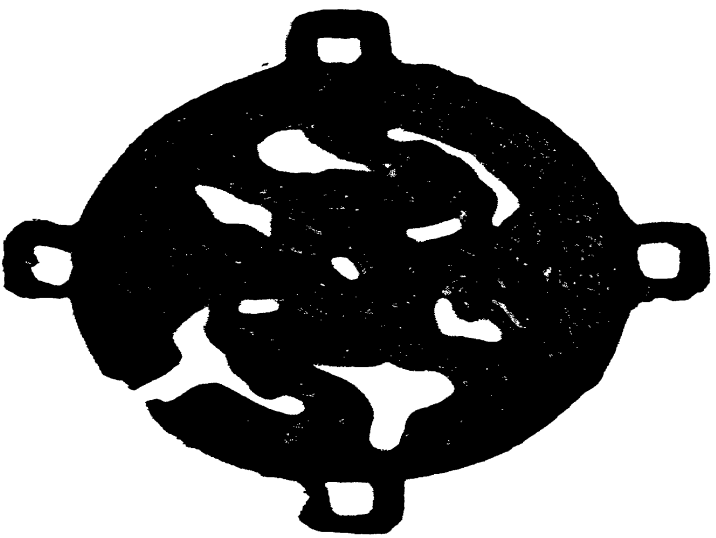


FIGURE 101c
Bronze plaque.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

this mean that it contains no evidence of any correlation between it and the later developments of Chinese art? We have shown the contrast between the heraldic treatment of animals in this art of the steppes on the one hand, and Chóu " virtualism " or the Han graphic style on the other. But there is one phase of Chinese art which really

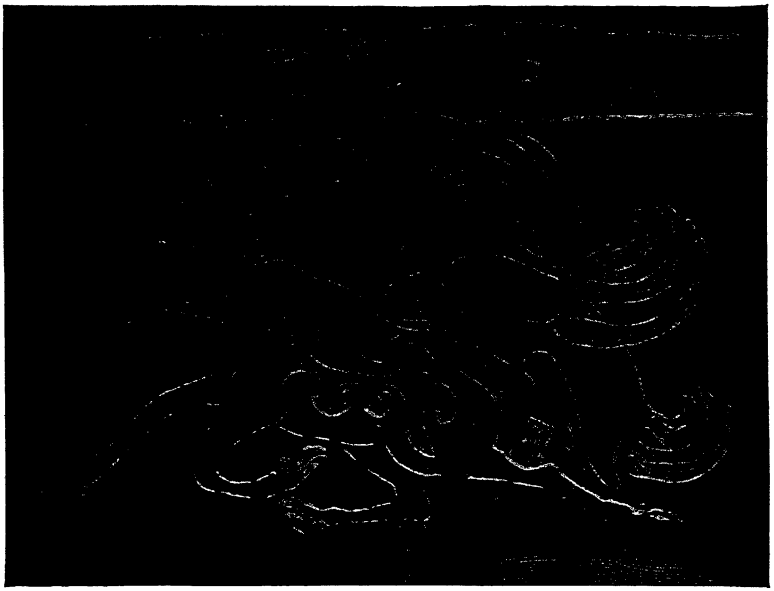


FIGURE 102
Embroidered carpet from Noïn-ola.
— *Kozlov excavations*

does seem to display affinities with the style improperly known as Scytho-Sarmatian, and that is the art of the Six Dynasties, as revealed, in particular, by a whole series of fibulæ. We may note that it was precisely at this period that the invasion and lasting occupation of northern China by the hordes of the Chao Huns, the Sien-pi tribe of the Tunguses, the Juan-Juan Mongols, and the Turco-Mongol T'o-pa brought the Chinese world into close association with the world

of the steppes and for a time imposed a like mentality upon it. We should therefore not be surprised to find in what Monsieur Vignier has called " the animal arabesque of the Six Dynasties " a pendant in Chinese art to the floral and vegetable ramifications of the animal forms heraldically treated by the art of the steppes. Not that the art of the Six Dynasties should necessarily be considered for this reason to be derived from the art of the nomads; but a comparison may be based on the fact that the nomad conquests in northern China created analogous conditions of life there. It is also worthy of note that the same intricate treatment is to be found in the Korean art of this very period.[1]

[1] See the buckle of copper and massive gold found at Rakuro (Umehara, in *Revue des arts asiatiques*, March 1926, Pl. XI).

CHAPTER II

Buddhist Influence in China

BUDDHISM IN CENTRAL ASIA
GRECO-ROMAN INFLUENCE

THE HISTORY OF CHINESE THOUGHT AND OF THE CHINESE æsthetic ideal, which can be explained by their own natural laws of development alone up to the fourth century of our era, was abruptly modified from this period onwards by the invasion of Buddhist ideas and types of art.

We may see how, as early as the fourth century, a number of the Tatar chiefs who had settled in northern China were converted to the religion of Śākyamuni. By the middle of the fifth century the most powerful of these princes, of the Wei dynasty, who belonged to the T'o-pa family, had supplanted all the others and, having extended his dominions as far as the regions bordering upon the Blue River, now made Buddhism the state religion. The purely Chinese emperors who were still reigning over southern China imitated their Sino-Tatar neighbours in the north — the southern Liang dynasty in the sixth century being quite as devoutly Buddhist as the northern dynasty of the Wei — so that within a few years the whole of China found itself tending towards a new ideal. For nearly five centuries the China whose genius had been for thousands of years past so consistently

native in character was followed by an Indian China of a totally different character. Let us now inquire what were these Indian artistic influences which Buddhism was to introduce with it on its establishment in China.

In the second volume of the present work we showed what schools of art were prevalent in India at the opening of the period corre-

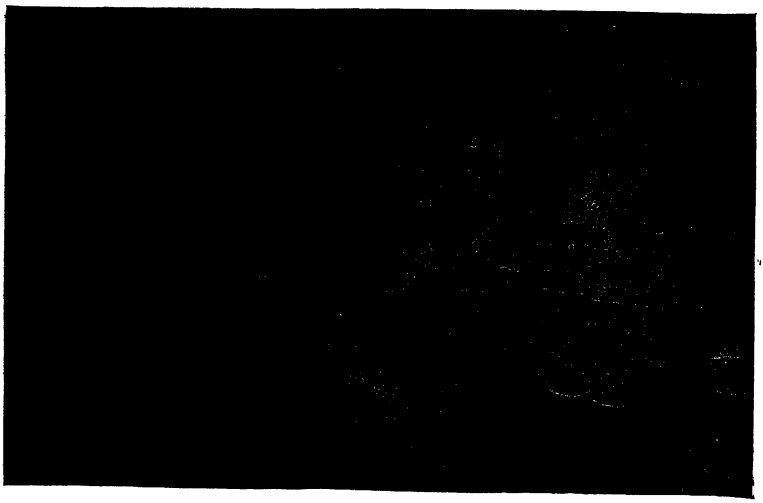


FIGURE 103
Frescoes of Bāmiyān.
— *From a copy by Mme André Godard*

sponding to the mediæval age of western Europe. On the one hand, there was the Greco-Buddhist school of north-west India, having as its centres the region of Taxila in the Punjāb and the Indo-Afghan provinces of the Kābul valley — Gandhāra, Nagarahara, Lampaka, and Kapiśa — a school which had nothing Indian about it but its Buddhism and was in every other respect a Greco-Roman type of art, belonging not to the Indian but to the Mediterranean world (Volume

II, pp. 110–20); and on the other hand there was Gupta art, having the Ganges valley and the Deccan as its centres from the fourth to the seventh century. This, however, was a genuinely Indian art, whose leading features may be summed up by defining it as a tropically naturalistic school, subdued, refined, and spiritualized by Buddhist idealism (see Volume II, pp. 138–42). And lastly, in Volume I of



FIGURE 104
Frescoes of Bāmiyān.
— *From a copy by Mme Godard*

the present work, we have seen the formation of the Sāsānian art of Persia in Iran, which extended its influence from the third to the sixth centuries as far as the Hindu Kush and Afghanistan. We shall now see how these varied schools of art — the Gandhārian, the Indo-Gupta, and the Sāsānian — were carried by Buddhism across central Asia as far as the frontiers of China.

Central Asia — the Kashgaria of the old geographers, the "Serindia" of Sir Aurel Stein, and the "Sin-kiang" or Chinese Turkestan

of present-day nomenclature — is composed, so far as its cultivated portions are concerned, of two chains of oases: Kashgar, Kūcha, Qarashar (Kara-shahr), and Turfān in the north, and Yarkand, Khotan, Niyā, and the sites of Lob-nor in the south. Though they adopted Turkish ways of life from the eighth and ninth centuries of our era onward, these oases had previously been inhabited by Indo-European populations whose languages, recently identified by the



FIGURE 105
Frescoes of Bāmiyān.
— *From a copy by Mme Godard*

missions of Professor Pelliot, Sir Aurel Stein, and the late Professor Von Le Coq, were as follows: Tokharian, spoken at Turfān and Kūcha — an Indo-European language of the Western type, having affinities not only with Armenian and Slav, but also, it would appear, with the Italo-Celtic group; east Iranian, spoken at Khotan; and Sogdian, also an Iranian dialect of Transoxiana, which was carried by the caravans of that region as far as the frontiers of China. In the eighth century part of this region, comprising Kūcha, Qarashar, and

Turfān, passed into the power of the Uigur Turks, the most civilized of the Altaic peoples, who, as we shall see, while assimilating the

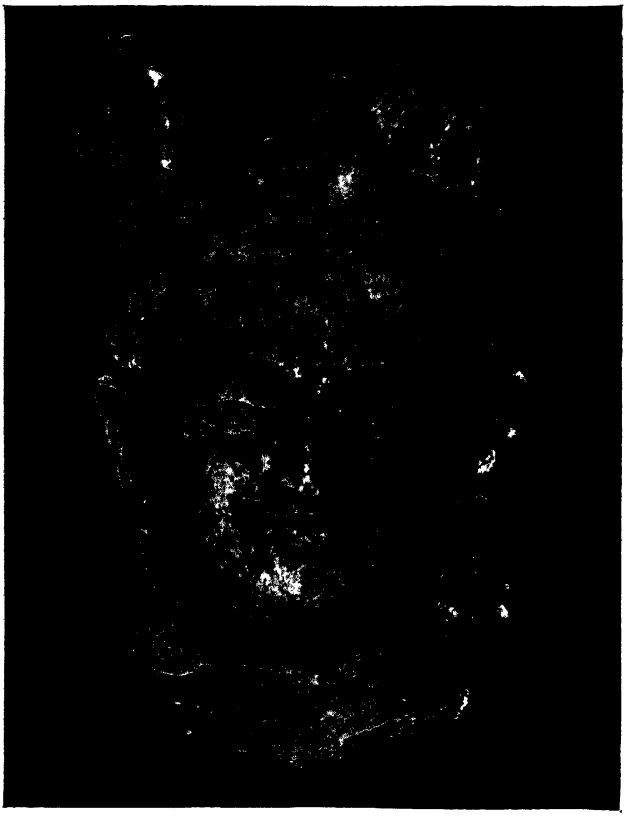


FIGURE 106
Stucco head from Haḍḍa.
— *Musée Guimet. Barthoux mission*

country to the Turkish model, preserved its heritage of Indo-European culture.

For this chain of oases in the midst of a vast zone of desert played almost as important a role in the history of civilization as the chain of islands in the Ægean Sea had done in the past. In this respect it

might almost be said that the Gobi desert, that sea of sand with outcropping stony banks, crossed by caravan-routes as the sea is crossed by those of ships, was indeed a sort of "inland sea of Asia"—another Mediterranean, as it were, serving as a means of communication between the civilizations which fringed its borders. By thus bringing them into touch with one another, it may be said to have given rise to a new kind of humanism, analogous to the culture of Alexandria. Just as in the Alexandrian world Hellenism served as a link between the Egyptian, Syro-Chaldean, Greek, and Latin types of culture, so Indian Buddhism, which began to spread over the whole of central Asia from the second century of our era onwards, disseminated through that region, now united by the bond of a like religious creed, the most fruitful blend of Greek, Indian, and Iranian influences.

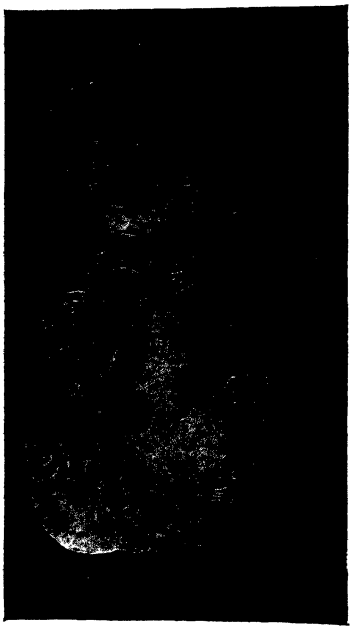


FIGURE 107
Stucco head from Tumshuq.
— *Louvre. Pelliot mission*

Greek influences, being the most direct, were no doubt the earliest in date. Indeed, at Haḍḍa, as in Gandhāra and at Taxila, the Greece of Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, and Pergamon lived on with a renewed vigour infused into it by the Buddhist religion which had been grafted on to it, while in its land of origin Hellas herself was congealing into rigidity in the art of the age of Diocletian and Constantine. In the Buddhist lands Greece remained Greece, while on Christian territory she became Byzantium. If, as Professor Hackin considers, the stucco figures from Haḍḍa

belong for the most part to the third to the fifth centuries,[1] is it not legitimate to say that the Hellenic genius, as a force of spontaneous creation and revival, had taken refuge in Kābul and found new life

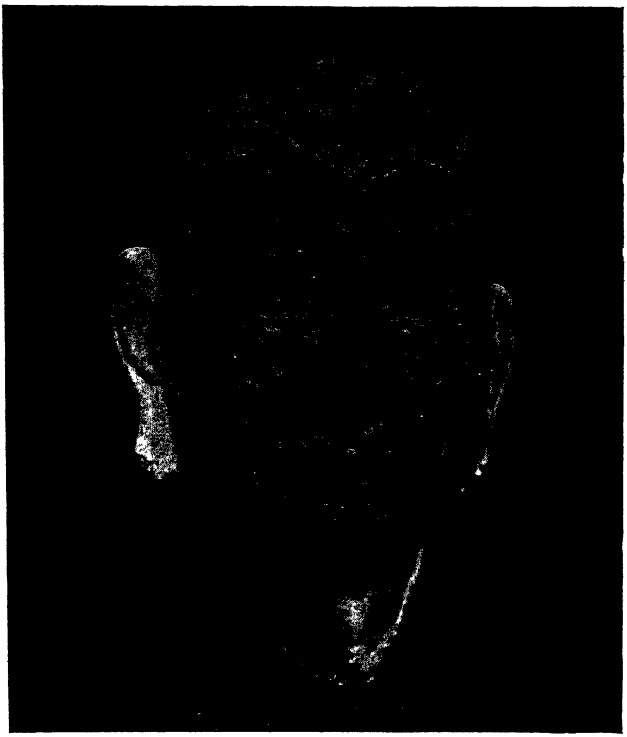


FIGURE 108
Stucco head of a monk, from Tumshuq.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

there? Hence we shall not be surprised to see this Greece of Gandhāra in turn giving rise to a whole group of Hellenic works in the heart of Kashgaria.

Indeed, at Rawak, to the east of Khotan, Gandhārian influence prevails unchallenged: on the walls of the courts within which once

[1] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 133–5.

stood the *stūpas*, there are some stucco bas-reliefs with figures of seated bodhisattvas (unfortunately now headless) which are remarkable for their breadth and rhythm as well as for the purely

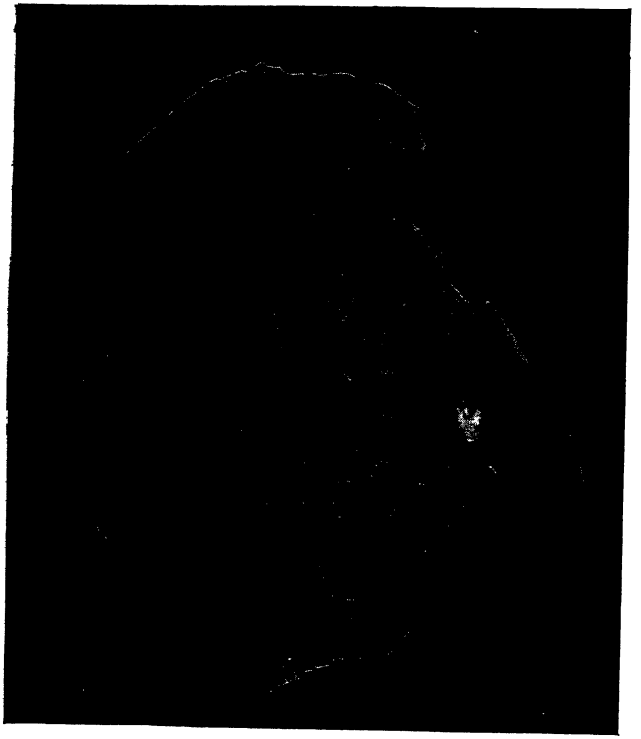


FIGURE 109
Stucco head of a barbarian (*mleccha*), from Tumshuq.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

Hellenic conventions adopted in the treatment of the draperies. To convince ourselves of this we have only to compare the reproductions of these works given by Sir Aurel Stein [1] with the photographs taken by Monsieur André Godard of the great statues of Buddhas found in

[1] Aurel Stein: *Ancient Khotan*, II, Pl. XIV et seq.

the course of the first excavations at Haḍḍa and since destroyed.[1] Indeed, according to Sir Aurel Stein, these works at Rawak would seem to date from the earliest centuries of our era and should therefore be contemporary with those of Haḍḍa.[2]

At this site of Rawak and also at Yotkan, which represents the primitive stage of Khotan, and Niyā, a site more to the east, which was abandoned at the end of the third century of our era, and the antiquities of which are earlier than the fourth century, Sir Aurel Stein found a whole collection of intaglios of Roman workmanship: Pallas Athene armed with the thunderbolt and wearing the ægis,[3] Zeus, Eros, Herakles, quadrigæ, etc.[4]

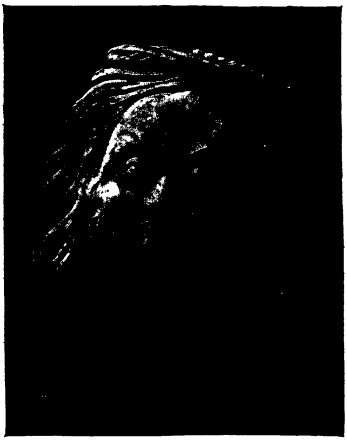


FIGURE 110
Stucco head of a *yaksha*, from Tumshuq.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

Farther towards the east, at Mirān, to the south of Lob-nor, Sir Aurel Stein's expedition discovered frescoes undoubtedly dating from the third and fourth centuries and very Greco-Roman in appearance, which seem to have been particularly influenced by the schools of Asia Minor and to have been the work of one "Tita," whose name must surely be an Indianized form of Titus. We may note, among the fragments brought back from this neighbourhood, a Buddha followed by his monks, which, in spite of the slight moustache in the Indian fashion, is purely Roman in tradition; [5] also a

[1] Afghan Room, Musée Guimet.
[2] Aurel Stein: *Ancient Khotan*, II, Pl. XIV et seq.
[3] Reproduced as frontispiece to Stein's *Ancient Khotan*. Cf. the stucco head of the type of a Pallas Athene brought back by the Barthoux mission to the Musée Guimet.
[4] Stein: *Ancient Khotan*, Pl. LXXI.
[5] Stein: *Serindia*, IV, Pl. XLII.

sort of beardless angels or genii, some winged,[1] the others wingless and wearing red cloaks, who might almost have come from Pompeii,

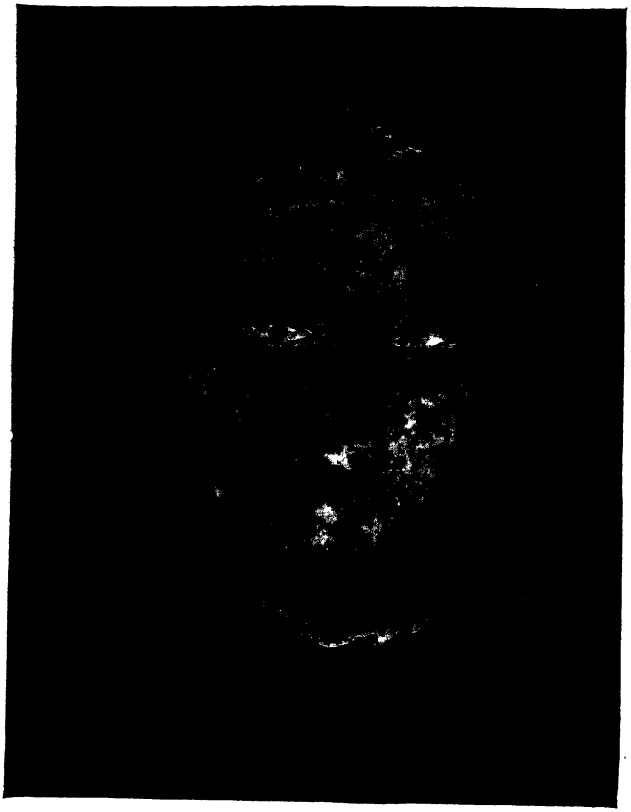


FIGURE 111
Stucco head from Tumshuq.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

except that, for all their classical regularity of type, these beautiful youths have a sort of languor which is characteristically Levantine; there are also some beardless figures of a similar type, wearing the

[1] Ibid., Pl. XL. Cf. the winged figures of Eros on one of the Haḍḍa frescoes, Musée Guimet, Barthoux collection.

Phrygian cap, which gives them some resemblance to Mithras;[1] a frieze of female figures playing the lute who are akin to the same type, their beauty being Levantine and their treatment Greco-Roman;[2] and, finally, an episode of the Viśvantara *jātaka*, one of the Buddhist "birth-stories," already referred to in Volume II of the present work (pp. 74–7), which shows the princess Mādrī, represented as being of the Romano-Levantine type mentioned above, riding with her two children in a quadriga of purely Roman form, preceded by the white elephant and followed by Prince Viśvantara on horseback. In the latter, too, may be noted the same mixture of Indian influences with classical ones brought from Roman Syria by way of Gandhāra.

Nowadays, indeed, as has been intimated above, we know what served as a link between the Greco-Roman East and the frescoes of the Gobi region with their hellenizing tendencies: it was the Gandhāra school of painting, now revealed to the world by the frescoes at Bāmiyān copied by Madame Godard or brought from Haḍḍa to the Musée Guimet. At Bāmiyān, for instance, there is a Buddha about thirty-eight yards high[3] in a niche whose upper part is adorned by a composition (Fig. 119) the central part of which shows, side by side with details indicative of Iranian influence, a winged female warrior — a reminiscence of some Pallas — the whole being crowned by a quadriga drawn by winged horses, of the Pegasus type, which we shall find occurring again at Ḳizil, Qumturā, and even as far afield as Tun-huang.[4]

Moreover, the frescoes at Haḍḍa also form a link between the art of the late Roman Empire and the painting of central Asia: there is a fragment in the Barthoux collection representing a standing Buddha

[1] Stein: *Serindia*, I, Fig. 136, 137 et seq., pp. 520 et seq. Cf. the beardless head wearing a Phrygian cap among the stucco figures from Haḍḍa, Musée Guimet, Barthoux collection.

[2] The type and treatment of these figures may be compared with certain Romano-Syrian female figures from Doura-Europos (Salihiya), reproduced by M. Cumont.

[3] Godard and Hackin: *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, Pl. XXII, Fig. 223–4.

[4] Cf. Von Le Coq: *Bilderatlas*, p. 97.

making the *abhaya mudrā* (gesture of reassurance), which already produces an impression similar to that of the "Catacomb style," almost verging on the Byzantine. In other paintings, which we may characterize by the epithet "Asiatic Pompeian," the academic anatomy and attitudes of the paintings at Mirān (notably in the group of the Viśvantara *jātaka* mentioned above) [1] may profitably be compared with certain winged bearers of offerings in the Bāmiyān frescoes reproduced by Madame André Godard, which also date from the third century (Fig. 103–105).[2]

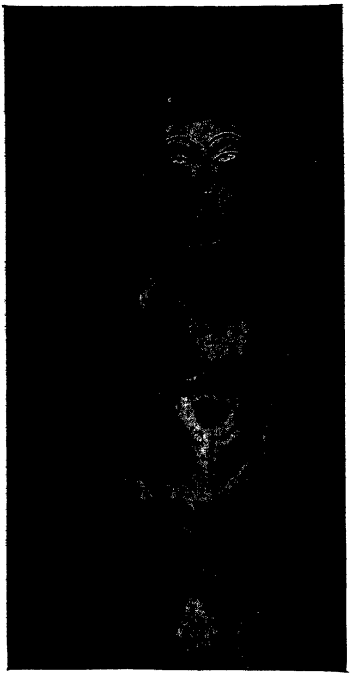


FIGURE 112
Devatā (divinity). Figurine from Qumturā.
— *Berlin, Museum für Völkerkunde. Von Le Coq mission. By courtesy of Professor Von Le Coq*

The same is true of the sculpture. The stucco figures and figurines representing Buddhas or disciples of the Buddha photographed at Haḍḍa by Messrs. André Godard and Barthoux or brought back by them to the Musée Guimet [3] have their exact counterpart in the stucco figures of a similar kind photographed by Sir Aurel Stein at Rawak, Khotan, also dating from the earliest centuries of our era,[4] which have the same classical draperies, impeccable in their amplitude and beauty of rhythm.

The Hellenistic works in the northern oases of Kashgaria — Tum-

[1] Stein: *Serindia*, I, Fig. 134, p. 517.
[2] Godard and Hackin, op. cit., Pl. XVII.
[3] These photographs and works are both on show in the two Afghan rooms of the Musée Guimet. Cf. Vol. I of the present work, Fig. 22, 23.
[4] Stein: *Ancient Khotan*, II, Pl. XIV et seq.

shuq, Kūcha, Qarashar, and Turfān — belong in the main to a later period, the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries; but the classical canon is none the less present in them. Professor Von Le Coq, Professor Pelliot, and Sir Aurel Stein brought back from these sites a number of stucco statuettes of standing Buddhas, some still bearing



FIGURE 113
Relief from Tumshuq.
— *Louvre. Pelliot mission*

traces of polychrome painting, which might equally well have been found at Haḍḍa or Taxila. Nothing could be more instructive in this connexion than a comparison between two typical specimens: on the one hand, the great drapery of a standing Buddha, which has unfortunately lost its head, from a stucco relief at Haḍḍa brought back by Monsieur Barthoux to the Musée Guimet; and, on the other hand, another statue of Buddha, also in stucco, brought back from Short-

shuq, near Qarashar, by Professor Von Le Coq, the drapery of which is painted red and is equally Greco-Roman.[1] Exactly the same is true of the physiognomy of this Buddha — an Apollo type converted into a Buddha by the addition of the *ūrṇā* and *ushṇīsha* (mark between the eyebrows and knot of hair) and by the lengthening of the lobe of the ears — which is that found throughout the whole of central Asia, sometimes purely classical in type, sometimes with the central Asiatic thickening which had already begun to appear and of which we shall speak below.[2] It is also true of the *genre* figures or studies of types which the image-makers of Haḍḍa and Taxila turned out in such large numbers: for instance, the type of the monk — a thin, intelligent face with a touch of sly humour — the bearded Brahman, the *yaksha* (ogre) with its resemblance to Socrates and Verlaine, or the barbarian with the long, drooping moustaches, almost similar specimens of which visitors to the Musée Guimet will be surprised to find in the cases of objects brought back from Haḍḍa by the Barthoux mission, and in those of objects brought back by the Pelliot mission from Tumshuq and Tun-huang (Fig. 106–110). The same result would be arrived at by comparing the Greco-Buddhist figurines in the museum at Taxila [3] with the corresponding stucco figures brought back to the British Museum from Qarashar and the region of Kūcha by Sir Aurel Stein. Professor Pelliot found the same range of figures at Tumshuq, and Sir Aurel Stein at Qarashar and Shortshuq, as Monsieur Barthoux did at Haḍḍa: stucco bas-reliefs bearing figures with impeccable draperies like those of the Gandhārian school,[4] beardless bodhisattvas with rather heavy features, figures of *dēvatas*

[1] Von Le Coq: *Buddhistische Spätantike*, I, Pl. 39. Also the bodhisattva of Chotsho (Turfān), of the ninth century, reproduced by Von Le Coq in his *Bilderatlas zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Mittelasiens*, Fig. 178; and Musée Guimet, No. 17434.

[2] Various heads of a similar nature in the Haḍḍa room at the Musée Guimet may be compared with these; also the stucco heads brought back from Tumshuq and Tun-huang by Professor Pelliot.

[3] *Archæological Survey of India, Report, 1912–1913*, p. 24, Pl. XVII, XVIII.

[4] Stein: *Serindia*, III, Fig. 295, p. 1198.

(divinities) which, like these, are soft, pleasing, and rather lacking in vigour (Fig. 106, 107, 113), bearded Brahmans of a purely Indo-European type, inspired by some Zeus, barbarians (*mleccha*) (Fig. 109), and ogres (*yakshas*) bearded like a Silenus[1] (Fig. 110), etc. On certain of these painted stucco statuettes of female divinities from Tumshuq, Qizil, and Shortshuq — delightful little polychrome statuettes with a profile which is still Hellenic while their eyes are already Chinese — we see the Greek genius and that of the Far East fused by direct contact, without any Indian intervention. We may mention in particular a charming little stucco figurine of a *dēvata* from Qumturā near Kūcha, painted in bright colours and with the breasts nude,[2] which one might almost take for an Alexandrian statuette. It is indeed strange to see, as it were, a procession of Tanagra figures stretching away to the distant frontiers of China, there to join hands with their Chinese sisters, the T'ang funeral statuettes of dancing female figures in pottery (Fig. 111–112).

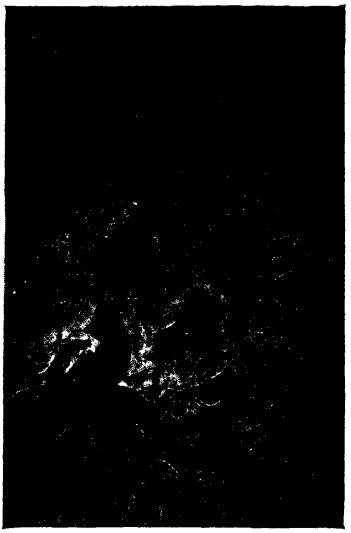


FIGURE 114
Fragment of a fresco from Dandān-uiliq.
— *Mission of Sir Aurel Stein. By courtesy of the India Office*

The same remarks apply to the painting of the northern Gobi region. The frescoes of Duldur-aqur, Qizil, Qumturā, and Kūcha, photographed or brought back by Professors Pelliot, Grünwedel, and Von Le Coq, show a whole series of figures which are classical both in inspiration and in treatment: Gandhārian Brahmans, and *yakshas*

[1] Ibid., IV, No. CXXXII.
[2] Von Le Coq: *Buddhistische Spätantike*, I, Pl. 35.

too, copied from the ordinary type of Greek " philosopher "; [1] draperies imitated from the traditional style of that school, nude male figures, rather hard in style, recalling Pompeii and Bāmiyān; [2] nude figures of youths worthy of Greek vases — for instance, the *ming-oï*

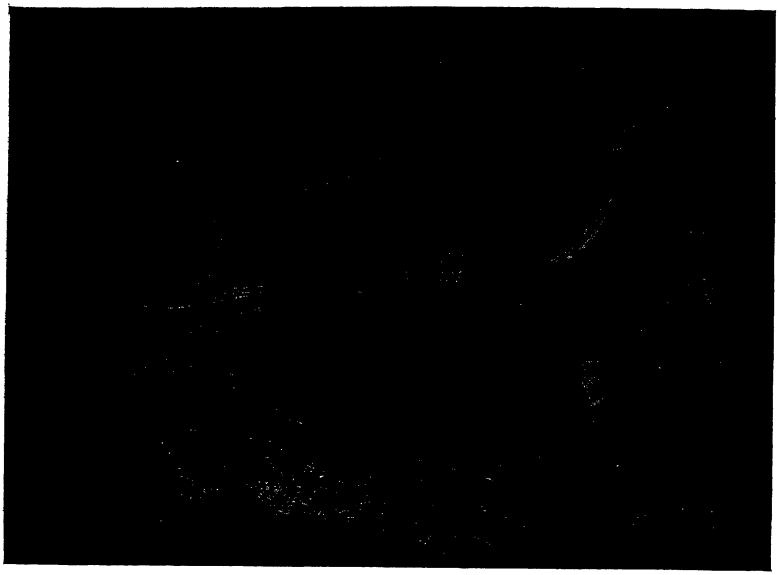


FIGURE 115
Flying genius.
— *Pelliot mission*

from the cave at Qizil known as the " Cave of the Zebu-chariot " [3] — nude figures of ascetics, with the skeleton-like anatomy of the well-known Gandhārian Buddha of Sikri; [4] erotic scenes recalling some banquet of antiquity; [5] all accompanied by classical motives of sea-

[1] Ernst Waldschmidt: *Gandhara, Kutscha, Turfan*, Fig. 35 b; also the Āṭavī *yaksha* in the cave of Māyā at Qizil: Von Le Coq: *Bilderatlas*, Fig. 160, p. 83.
[2] Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 141.
[3] Ibid., p. 125.
[4] Von Le Coq: *Bilderatlas*, Fig. 165–6, and Waldschmidt, op. cit., Fig. 30–5.
[5] Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*, pp. 125, 126, 128.

horses, sirens, etc. It is interesting to note that these paintings must date from the sixth and seventh centuries — that is, from after the destruction of the art-centres of Gandhāra, and, in particular, of the school of Haḍḍa. Thus the Buddhist monasteries of the Kūcha region had received the heritage of the Gandhāra school in time, and continued, till far on into the Middle Ages, to hand on its lessons, which were those of Greece and Rome, in the heart of Chinese Turkestan.

At Turfān, indeed, the easternmost of these oases, we reach the frontiers of China. And on the sites excavated by archæologists in



FIGURE 116
Fresco from Bāmiyān.
— *From a copy by Mme André Godard*

this region — Idiqutshähri, Murtuq, Bäzäkliq, and even Chotsho — we again find, as late as the ninth century, stucco heads in the "central Asian" style, copied from the similar figures turned out in quantity at Taxila and Haḍḍa. It is a surprise to find upon a fresco from Idiqutshähri, brought back to the Berlin Museum, a woman with her hair dressed in the Greek fashion, and draped in the Hellenic peplos and palla. On the same site the German expedition discovered a large number of statuettes or frescoes representing bodhisattvas or Buddhas, some sitting in the European fashion, the faces, of the statuettes at least, having often an Apollo-like grace, which is still rather effeminate and languid, while the treatment of the draperies

is hackneyed, and in the frescoes has at times a touch of Byzantine conventionalization, already foreshadowed in the frescoes of Bāmiyān and Haḍḍa; yet all of these are works in the most obviously Gandhārian style.

The use of the word Byzantine in such a connexion should cause no surprise. Following as it did every stage in the evolution of Greco-Roman art, it would have been impossible for the painting of central Asia, with its hellenizing tendencies, to do otherwise than show signs of the final evolution of this art in the direction of Byzantinism. Thus it will be no surprise to find at Tun-huang, the last stage in the progress of Gandhārian art towards China, a banner of the eighth century, brought back to the British Museum by Sir Aurel Stein,[1] which bears a standing figure of Śākyamuni, flanked by two bodhisattvas, of a hieratic quality which is that of Roman art already in the Byzantine stage — a quality all the more striking because, in the Indo-Gupta character of the *apsaras* hovering above it, Ajaṇṭā joins hands with Hōryūji (cf. Fig. 104; see also Fig. 129).

BUDDHISM IN CENTRAL ASIA: GUPTA INFLUENCE

IT IS CURIOUS TO OBSERVE THAT, WHILE INDIAN BUDDHISM AT ONCE carried the Greek ideal of art through central Asia, it did not introduce that of the purely Indian or Gupta school till later. While Greco-Buddhist figures or reliefs appear as early as the first three centuries, it seems that we must wait till the sixth century before we find statues which remind us of the works at Sārnāth,[2] or pictures which recall the frescoes of Ajaṇṭā.[3]

[1] Binyon: *L'Art asiatique au British Museum, Ars Asiatica*, VI, Pl. XV.

[2] Cf. Vol. II of the present work, pp. 141 et seq., Fig. 41–42.

[3] Ibid., p. 147 et seq., Fig. 45–53. It goes without saying that Ajaṇṭā is here referred to, not as a particular site, but as an example of Indian painting. I do not wish to suggest that the frescoes of Kashgaria were directly influenced by Ajaṇṭā, but by the school of painting of which Ajaṇṭā is the typical example, owing to its good state of preservation. In this connexion we may draw attention to the recent discovery by Professor Jouveau-Dubreuil of some Pallava frescoes of the seventh century (about 690) in the Kaila-

In the southern part of the Gobi region, for example, it is in the eighth century that Gupta art asserts itself unchallenged in the frescoes of Dandān-uiliq. Side by side with paintings derived from other schools, of which we shall speak below, there is a fresco discovered on this site by Sir Aurel Stein

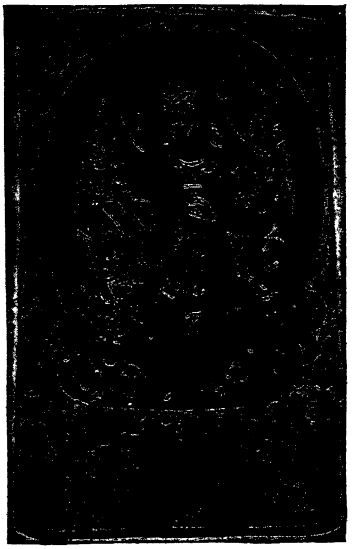


FIGURE 117

Painting from Dandān-uiliq.
— *After Sir Aurel Stein. By courtesy of the India Office*

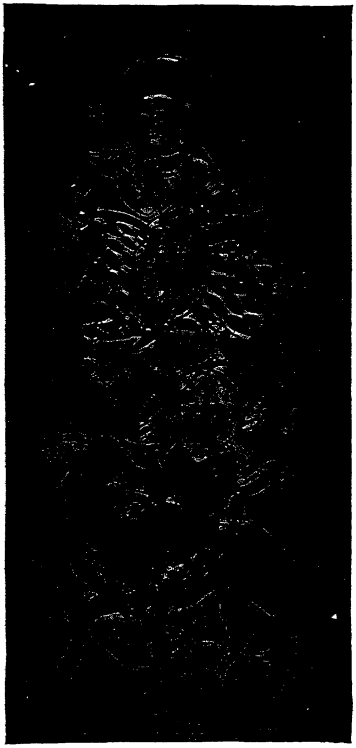


FIGURE 118

Painting from Dandān-uiliq.
— *After Sir Aurel Stein. By courtesy of the India Office*

which shows us a nude young woman rising from a pool full of lotus-blooms, a delicious *nāgī* of Khotan who, in spite of her modest gesture, recalling that of the Medicean Venus, might almost have stepped down from one of the ceilings at Ajaṇṭā (Fig. 114).

sanathasvami temple, Conjeeveram (Kanci), in the Carnatic. See Anavamuthan: "A Hindu Counterpart of Ajaṇṭā. Discovery of Pallava Paintings," in the *Hindu Illustrated Weekly*, February 8, 1931.

But Indo-Gupta influence makes itself directly felt in the oases of the northern part of the Gobi desert in particular. Almost all the frescoes at Qizil, Kūcha, and Qarashar, dating from the seventh and eighth centuries, are derived from it. We may cite as an instance Queen Māyā in the "attitude of a dancer" in a nativity scene at Qizil, forming part of the representation of the "four great miracles,"[1] or the "dance of the Queen" belonging to the legend of Rudrayana in the Cave of the Treasure,[2] or, again, the nude dancing-woman in the group known as "death and the dancing-girl," also reproduced by Von Le Coq.[3] In all these representations we have the same supple, swaying nudes, with a pervasive grace and an intoxicating charm which are the product of a tropical soil and are in contrast with the slender, elongated grace of the limbs; while we also find the same poises of a refined and studied art borrowed from the science of the Indian dancing-girl; in a word, we have the whole atmosphere of Ajaṇṭā. Sometimes, moreover, the graces of Ajaṇṭā breathe life into the lessons of Greek classicism, and then we find still more elongated limbs, with an elegance which is quite Botticellian.[4] Again, we are reminded as much of Ajaṇṭā as of Bāmiyān by the representations of flying genii, *gandharvas* and others, which are so frequent at Qizil,[5] from whence they were to pass to Tun-huang, to the Korean tomb of Sammyori and to the Hōryūji in Japan (cf. Fig. 105, 115).

For the rest, from the sixth century onward the whole of central Asian painting is transformed by this inrush of Gupta influence, and in this respect the artists of Kūcha merely illustrate the general law. The anatomy grows more supple, the contours gain in softness, the attitude and gestures in elegance, and soon, even, in preciosity; the

[1] Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*, p. 167, Fig. 383, and Von Le Coq: *Bilderatlas*, Fig. 157, p. 82.

[2] Von Le Coq: *Altbuddhistische Spätantike*, IV, Pl. 3; Waldschmidt, op. cit., Pl. 34.

[3] *Bilderatlas*, Pl. 226, p. 98.

[4] Waldschmidt, op. cit., Pl. 43.

[5] Von Le Coq: *Bilderatlas*, Fig. 172; and, for the Pelliot mission, the *gandharvas* of Qizil-Sairam, reproduced in Godard and Hackin: *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, Pl. XLIV–XLVI.

chaste yet voluptuous softness of the Indian nudes lends a new tenderness even to the sacred scenes, and this innocent sensuousness, pressed into the service of a mystical idealism, still further strengthens the analogy which suggests itself to us between these works and those of Italian art before Raphael.

Regarded from one point of view, the Qizil school of painting represents the sensibility of Ajaṇṭā breathing life into the somewhat cold regularity of an imitation of Greco-Roman art.

But it is something more than this: it is a revelation of Iranian influences in Turkestan.



FIGURE 119

Fresco from Bāmiyān.
— *From a copy by Mme André Godard*





FIGURE 120

Fresco from the Cave of the Painters, Qizil.
— *Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin. Von Le Coq mission. By courtesy of Professor Von Le Coq*

BUDDHISM IN CENTRAL ASIA: IRANIAN INFLUENCE

IN ADDITION TO THE GRECO-ROMAN INFLUENCE AND ONE WHICH WAS, strictly speaking, Indian, a third cultural and artistic influence was disseminated by Buddhism through central Asia and up to the Chinese frontiers: that of Sāsānid Iran.[1]

Indeed, the relations between Sāsānid Iran and the Buddhist world are being shown every day to have been far more intimate than we should have been justified in supposing at first sight. The fact is that at various periods the ancient province of Bactria, which was converted to Buddhism as early as the third century B.C., and which Hsüan-tsang was to find still so profoundly Indianized in the seventh century of our era, formed part of the empire of Iran. It seems, indeed, that about 230 it was subdued by Ardashīr, the first of the Sāsānid great kings, who apparently expelled or brought into subjection the Kūshān princes of that land. About 303–310 we even see the Sāsānid Hormizd II becoming the father-in-law, and no doubt the suzerain, too, of the last of the Kūshān sovereigns of Kābul. After that time the region of Balkh was a dependency of Persia until about the middle of the fifth century, when it was invaded by the Ephthalite Huns. It was again reconquered about 566 by the great Sāsānid king Khosrau I, and it was not till the end of the century that Bactria was definitively wrested from Persia by the Turks. This long association between a Sāsānid viceroyalty and the Buddhist Church in Bactria explains the harmony between these elements revealed by the frescoes of Bāmiyān.[2] Indeed, on the well-known frescoes which form the subject of a study by Monsieur and Madame André Godard and Monsieur Hackin, and belong, some to the third century, others to the fifth, we see Sāsānid princes and Iranian noble-

[1] Cf. Vol. I, pp. 155–9.

[2] Cf. Vol. I, pp. 155–9.

men associated with Gandhārian Buddhas and surrounded with monks who are likewise Greco-Buddhist, while not far off we have mythical beings hovering in the air who are a blend of Greco-Buddhist inspiration with the traditions of Gupta art (Fig. 116). We shall therefore not be surprised to see the Buddhist missionaries carrying the art of Sāsānid Persia, together with Hellenic and Indo-Gupta art,



FIGURE 121
Fresco from Qumturā.
— *After Von Le Coq. By courtesy of Professor Von Le Coq*

into central Asia— that is, into the zone of political influence of the Chinese Empire.

From this point of view, indeed, it is the latest discoveries in Afghanistan that have set us on the right track. In the photographs brought back by Messrs. Godard and Hackin the frescoes of Bāmiyān and Dukhtar-i Nūshirvān — the former Sāsāno-Greco-Buddhist in character, the latter more particularly Sāsānid — show most of the elements which we shall find at Qizil. Among the paintings which adorn the niche of the Buddha, about thirty-eight yards in height and dating from the fifth or sixth century of our era at Bāmiyān,[1] as

[1] Godard and Hackin, op. cit., Pl. XXIV.

in the frescoes of Dukhtar-i Nūshirvān,[1] we shall find the type of a bearded Sāsānid king or viceroy, with his head-dress adorned with symbols of the sun and moon (cf. Volume I, Fig. 116), with which we are familiar from the reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam, Shāpūr, and Tāq-i Bustān. It is this same type of Sāsānid prince, with the beard and tiara, that we shall also find in a painting on wood dating from the eighth century, discovered by Sir Aurel Stein at Dandān-uiliq, in the region of Khotan, representing a seated figure with the Sāsānid tiara and full beard, dressed in a rich green jerkin, breeches with raised embroidery, and heavy boots, all characteristic articles of Iranian costume, and whose four arms alone bear witness to any reminiscence of Indian models (Fig. 117);[2] while the other paintings on wood from Dandān-uiliq reproduced by Aurel Stein, representing two figures, each with a cup in his hand, one mounted on a dappled horse, the other on a camel[3] (Fig. 118), are also derived from Iranian art. As we have pointed out in Volume I of the present work, we have here the first authentically "Persian" modern paintings, forming a link between the "belated Greco-Sāsānid" school of Sāmarrā and the first Arabo-Persian miniatures of Mesopotamia, such as the *fonds Schéfer* manuscript in the Louvre and the "primitives" in the Vever collection.

But it is above all in the archæological sites of the region of Kūcha, such as Qumturā, Qizil, and Kirish, that we find traces of a flourishing material and artistic culture which was frankly Iranian, though closely associated with the Buddhist religion, from the sixth to the eighth centuries. When, between the years 1904 and 1907, the German missions of Professors Von Le Coq and Grünwedel discovered this civilization, we might have asked ourselves how this Iranian civilization made its way into the heart of the Gobi region. The work of Monsieur and Madame André Godard and Professor Hackin at

[1] Ibid., Fig. 25, p. 67.
[2] Stein: *Ancient Khotan*, II, Pl. LXI.
[3] Ibid., II, Pl. LIX.

Bāmiyān between 1923 and 1924 has now supplied the answer to this question. Indeed, nothing could be more significant in this connexion than a comparison between the frescoes in the niche of the Buddha at Bāmiyān copied by Madame Godard for the Musée Guimet, on the one hand (Fig. 119), and, on the other hand, the frescoes of Qumturā and from the caves at Qizil (especially the caves "of the painters" and "of the sixteen sword-bearers"), part of

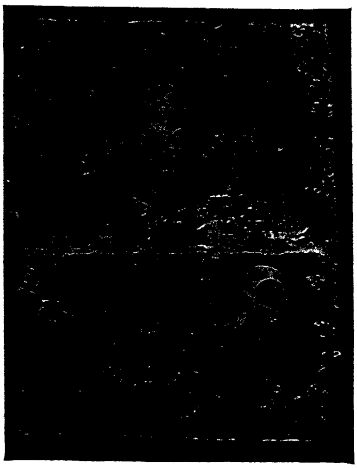


FIGURE 122

Donor, from a fresco at Bäzäkliq. — *Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin. Von Le Coq mission. By courtesy of Professor Von Le Coq*



FIGURE 123

Fresco from Bäzäkliq. — *Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin. Von Le Coq mission. By courtesy of Professor Von Le Coq*

which have been moved to the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (Fig. 120, 121). The frescoes in the niche of the great Buddha, thirty-eight yards high, at Bāmiyān probably date from the fifth to the sixth centuries, the frescoes of Qizil and Qumturā, as we said above, from

the sixth, seventh, and eighth. In the moon-god occupying the centre of the composition at Bāmiyān, and in the donors " on the balcony " who surround him on both sides (Fig. 119),[1] we already see the type of the " knights " of Qizil appearing: elegant sword-bearers or slender lancers clad in a long, close-fitting tunic edged with a wide band, and often characterized by a large lapel turned back on the right-hand side.

It is this type of Iranian knight, now freed from the heavy Sāsānid armour and turned into a most elegant gentleman, which peoples the caves of Qizil and Qumturā. On the frescoes brought back to the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin, and in the fine reproductions of them given by Professor Von Le Coq,[2] we are at once struck by the decidedly Iranian type of these works and by their curiously mediæval character: all the members of this Indo-European aristocracy of Kūcha, these handsome noblemen and lovely ladies, these squires and pages — even the painters who have taken care to paint their own portraits — remind us of the ancient chivalry of western Europe and of the figures in such manuscripts as the Bible of Charles the Bald or the famous Book of Hours of the Duke of Berry.[3] But these are no more than accidental cultural analogies, forming part of that Asiatic " Gothicism " of which we shall speak below. Here we are dealing with Iranian art alone, and the paintings at Qizil, which are for the most part contemporary with the culminating glories of the empire of the Khosraus in Iran and its fall, form, as a matter of fact, the spiritual link between the art of the Sāsānid frescoes and that of the Persian miniatures of the Islamic period.[4]

[1] Godard and Hackin, op. cit., Pl. XXII, XXIII.

[2] *Buddhistische Spätantike;* short account in the *Bilderatlas.*

[3] I may here refer the reader to the picture which I have drawn of the society of Kūcha in my *Sur les traces du Bouddha* (Paris, Plon, 1929), pp. 39–60, dealing with "Persian paintings found in the heart of the Gobi desert."

[4] We may also note the heraldic treatment of animals at Qizil derived from Sāsānid models, which prevails even in the representations of that mythical bird the *garuḍa;* see Von Le Coq: *Bilderatlas,* Fig. 273, p. 101; also the stuffs with heraldic patterns from Turfān in *Chotscho,* Pl. 50.



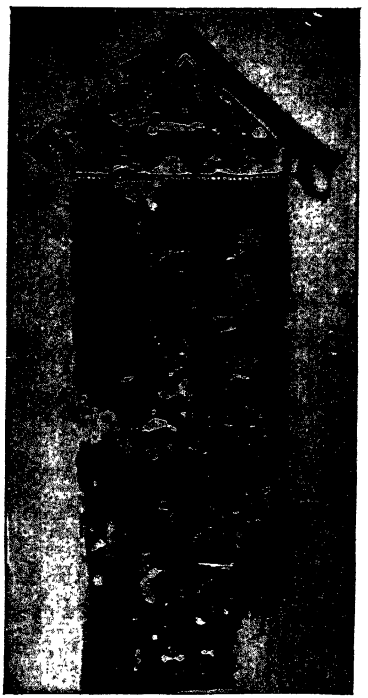


FIGURE 124

Uigur princes, from a fresco at Bäzäkliq.

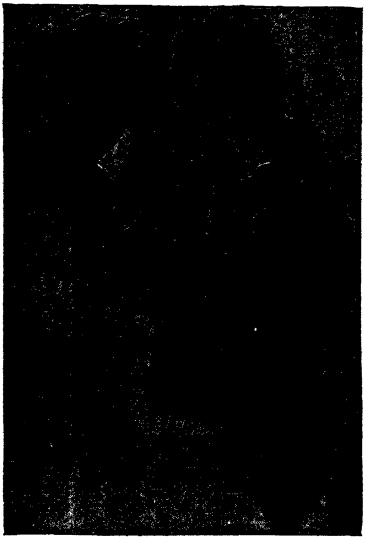


FIGURE 125

Uigur donor, fresco from Murtuq.

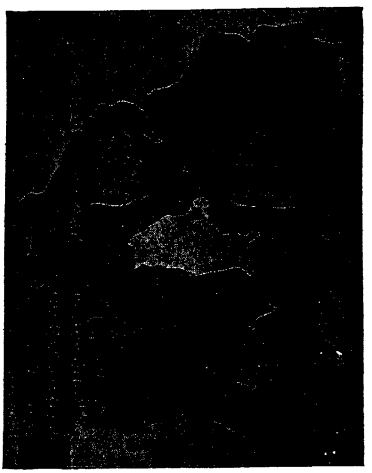


FIGURE 126

Donor, on a banner from Turfān.

FIGURE 127

Page from a Manichæan work from Turfān.

— Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin. Von Le Coq mission. By courtesy of Professor Von Le Coq

After the frescoes of Kūcha come the Buddhist or Manichæan paintings of the region of Turfān, which are, moreover, their artistic successors. These are for the most part works dating from the period when Turfān had passed into the power of the Uigur Turks. The Uigur kings showed themselves true heirs to the ancient Indo-European culture of the land, and Iranian influences increased among them to a still greater extent after they had embraced Manichæism in 763 — that compound of Mazdaism and Christianity which had its origin and home in Iran.[1]

In fact, in spite of the usual conventional works of the Gandhāra type, the art of Turfān seems to have been eminently Sino-Iranian. Most of the non-priestly princes or warriors who appear in the Buddhist frescoes of Bäzäkliq and Murtuq, as represented in Professor Von Le Coq's magnificent album *Chotscho*, proclaim themselves half Sāsānid, half T'ang in drawing, costume, arms, and physical type. This is true of all the "knights of Turfān," who are somewhat akin to those of Qizil, with greaves, arm-pieces, etc. (Fig. 122).[2] Among other figures we may mention a sort of Buddhist Parsifal, a gentle but virile knight with an absorbed expression, who is being given the tonsure by a monk on receiving orders (Fig. 123);[3] also other warriors at Bäzäkliq, represented in the guise of *lokapālas*, who are less elegant and more massive, with equally complete armour of a Sino-Sāsānid character.[4] Elsewhere, in a *praṇidhi* scene, we see grouped round the Buddha bearded donors of a type which is either Middle Eastern or Tokharian, followed by their camels and mules — figures which are the very image of the east Iranians, Sogdians or inhabitants of Kūcha — of whom the caravans which carried Persian influence as far as the Chinese frontiers were composed.[5] In a group

[1] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 277–82.

[2] Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*, pp. 240, 311, and Von Le Coq, *Buddhistische Spätantike*, III, Pl. 14 and 18.

[3] Von Le Coq: *Chotscho*, Pl. 36.

[4] Ibid., Fig. 18, 19, 33.

[5] Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*, 274, and *Bericht über archäologischen*



FIGURE 128
Uiguro-Manichæan miniature from Turfān.

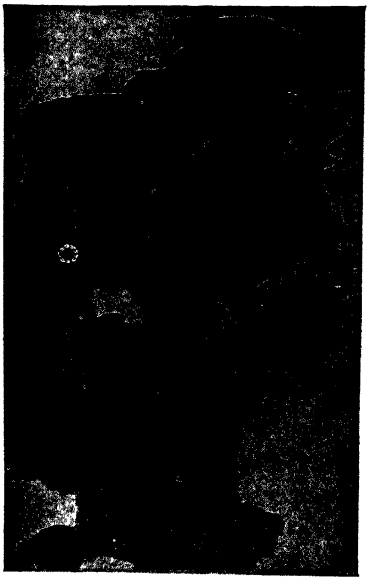


FIGURE 130
Manichæan miniature from Turfān.

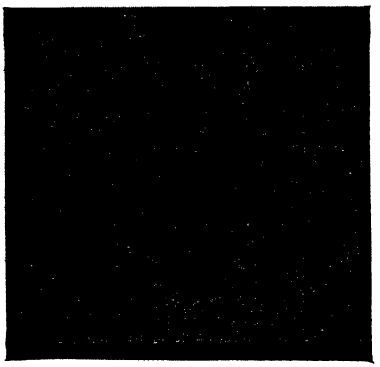


FIGURE 129
Christian fresco from Turfān.
— *Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin. Von Le Coq mission. By courtesy of Professor Von Le Coq*

of frescoes in the neighbourhood of Idiqutshähri we may also note a whole series of Uigur donors of the ninth century, in full ceremonial costume, wearing a sort of mitra or tiara on their heads, accompanied by women offering flowers, musicians, and servants — works in which Persian art is directly blended with that of China without any Indian intervention [1] (cf. Fig. 124–126).

This is naturally still more true of the miniatures and illustrations in the Manichæan manuscripts, also of the ninth century, brought back from Turfān by the German missions.[2] Thanks to the courtesy of the late Professor Von Le Coq, we here reproduce two of these paintings, in which appear the characteristic white head-dresses and garments of the clergy of Mānī (Fig. 127, 128). The Iranian character of these works is too obvious to be insisted upon: here we have the first known Persian miniatures, and it is interesting to compare them with certain figures in the 'Abbāsid frescoes of Sāmarrā, which are, moreover, of the same period.[3] Even the floral decoration and ornaments of conventionalized foliage are in harmony with the style of Arabo-Persian miniatures and also, as Monsieur Charles Vignier has pointed out to the writer, with the illuminations on certain pages from Armeno-Byzantine manuscripts (Fig. 130).[4]

BUDDHISM IN CHINA: WEI SCULPTURE

IF WE TRY TO ARRIVE AT THE GENERAL LAW GOVERNING THE VARIOUS types of art of which we have given an impression above — whether Greco-Buddhist, Gupta Indian, or Sāsānid Persian — at the time

Arbeiten in Idikutshähri, 1902–1903, Akademie der Wissenschaften (Munich, 1906), p. 162, Fig. 155–6; Waldschmidt, op. cit., Pl. 18 b and c.

[1] Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*, pp. 333–5; Von Le Coq: *Buddhistische Spätantike*, III, Pl. 17, and *Chotscho*, Pl. 30–2.

[2] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 277–82.

[3] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 208–9.

[4] These Manichæan miniatures are reproduced in Von Le Coq's works mentioned above: in *Chotscho*, Pl. 1, 3, 5, 6, and in the whole of Vol. II of *Buddhistische Spätantike*.

they reached the Chinese frontiers, we shall see that, however much they may have differed among themselves, all three of them were undergoing a transformation of an analogous order and were evolving in the direction of a common ideal, for which we can find no more suitable epithet than that of "Gothic," on account of the analogies which it suggests.

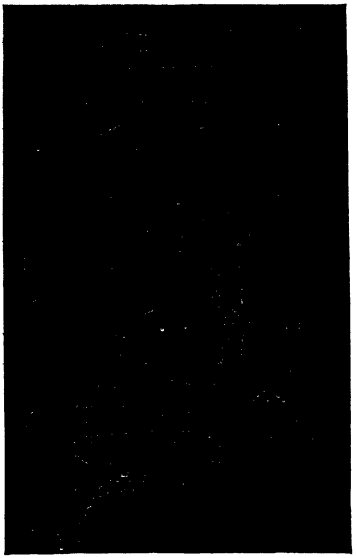


FIGURE 131
Schist relief from Haḍḍa.
— *Musée Guimet. Barthoux mission*

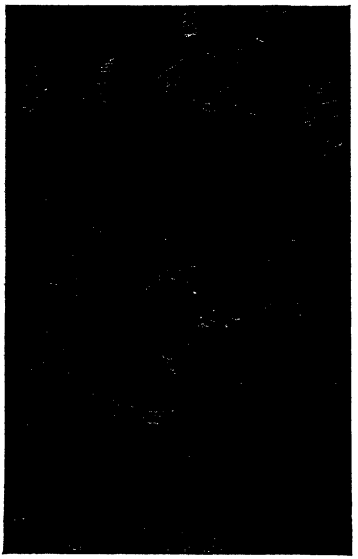


FIGURE 132
Wei bodhisattva at Yun-kang.
— *Chavannes mission*

The Greco-Roman art of Gandhāra was itself moving towards a "Gothic" type of ideal at the time when Buddhist missionaries carried it with them into central Asia — a fact to which we have already called attention in Volume II of the present work (pp. 124–8). But it is superfluous to labour the point. No visitor to the Musée Guimet, on being taken to see the stucco figures discovered at Haḍḍa by Monsieur Barthoux, has been able to refrain from exclaiming

that they were absolutely Gothic. Christs in glory or in judgment, apostles and King Davids, angels or monks, smiling figures like those of the portals of Reims or pathetic praying figures, hooded figures recalling mediæval European pages or jesters, demons of Mārā resembling the gargoyles of Gothic cathedrals — the statuettes or reliefs in sun-dried clay from Haḍḍa invariably foreshadow our own Gothic types. But this is a Gothic anterior to our own by a thousand years, which could have brought no influence to bear upon it either in time or in space, and the existence of which can only be explained from the philosophical point of view by a sort of law of the human mind which may be enunciated as follows: both in the West and at Gandhāra we may take as a basis the purely formal plastic conventions of the Greco-Roman school, Gallo-Roman in the West and Greco-Buddhist at Gandhāra. But historical developments created a definitive separation between these two centres, proportionate to the distance between them. Two great universal religions — on the one hand Christianity, and on the other Mahāyāna Buddhism (the "Greater Vehicle") — became implanted, the former in the West and the latter in north-west India, with the adjacent regions of Afghanistan; and, though no doubt opposed to each other in dogma, these religions were characterized by a like idealism, a like mysticism, and a similar type of sensibility and piety: under the action of these two types of idealism we shall see how, in the two instances, the common Greco-Roman substratum undergoes a parallel process of transformation in accordance with analogous laws and in a sense which is almost identical. The purely formal plastic conventions of Alexandria and Rome were emptied of their content; a spiritualized Greco-Roman art, purified of its "narcissism," tore itself away from self-contemplation and was borne upwards out of itself towards the sphere of transcendental idealism and ardent mysticism. And it was this neo-Gandhārian "proto-Gothic" which the China of the fourth century was to receive by way of the oases of the Gobi desert. Con-

ditions such as these were to have a great share in the creation of Wei Buddhist art.

By a curious coincidence, which can only be explained by similar philosophical influences, the strictly Indian art known as Gupta art,

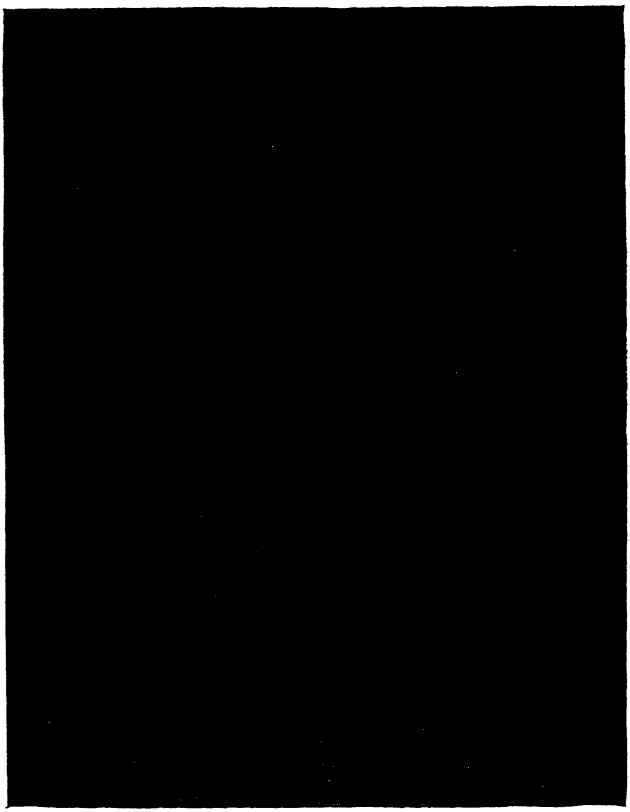


FIGURE 133
Wei bodhisattva at Yun-kang.
— *Chavannes mission*

though inspired by a totally different æsthetic ideal, was evolving according to analogous tendencies in the India of the Ganges basin.

Gupta forms, so flowing and softened as to have eliminated all but the most essential lines — so tenderly sensuous in quality that they have been called "a caress in line" — had become more slender and hieratic, either falling into a mannered preciosity of gesture, or else soaring with a spontaneous impulse towards the mystical heavens of the Mahāyāna, as the case might be. It was by such a process as this that the Ganges basin passed from the Gupta art of the fourth to seventh centuries to the Pāla art of the eighth and ninth centuries. The laws governing this transition are most complex: the hieratic tendency of this art is so strong that in certain respects it may be regarded as a sort of Byzantinization of the ethereal naturalism of the Gupta period. But it is soon evident that the growing formality is by no means lifeless in its stiffness, and that this hieratic Pāla art not only preserves all the vigour of the Gupta, but even adds a youthful freshness of its own, which, in combination with the slender grace of the forms and the preciosity of the attitudes, produces an impression of rare elegance. To be convinced of this we have only to turn over the pages of any album of Pāla art[1] in which are reproduced a few of the many stone or metal statues in the British Museum and the museums of Calcutta, Patna, or Nalanda, as well as the delightful illuminations of the manuscripts written on palm-leaves which have come down to us from this period.[2] We see at once how far the general style of this statuary, too, is governed by an ideal very near to European Gothic, accompanied, in the backgrounds and back-pieces, by soaring pointed arches and rich architectural ornament, often of a flamboyant character. From this time onward, moreover, this ideal was common to nearly all the Indian lands, for it is to be found, either effectively or in germ, in Cave I at Ajaṇṭā, as well as on the Javanese reliefs of Bōrōbudur and Prambanan. What is more, it is this Pāla Gothic style, exaggerated and conventionalized in the

[1] For instance, Mr. J. C. French's little volume: *The Art of the Pal Empire of Bengal* (Oxford University Press, 1928).

[2] Ibid., Pl. XXIII a.

art of Nepal, which was to spread beyond Indian soil and, through the agency of this latter art, give rise to the sculpture and painting of Tibet.[1]

Even Iranian art, as we have seen, was also on the way towards evolving forms analogous to those of our own Middle Ages. Neither



FIGURE 134
Wei figure at Yun-kang.
— *Chavannes mission*

the mediæval exquisite who has painted his own portrait in the " Cave of the Painters " at Qizil nor his work would feel out of place in the presence of either the mosaics of Ravenna, the Bayeux tapestry, or the French miniatures of the fifteenth century: for the whole of the European Middle Ages, as well as those of Persia, is already to be found latent in the Iranian frescoes of Qizil (Fig. 120, 121).

[1] See Vol. IV of the present work, Chapter ii.

Thus a late form of Buddhism was engaged in creating a sort of Gothic out of these Greco-Roman elements, just as it did out of Indo-Gupta or Iranian elements ten centuries before our Gothic period — a style which produces a similar impression upon us simply because it grew out of a similar state of mind.

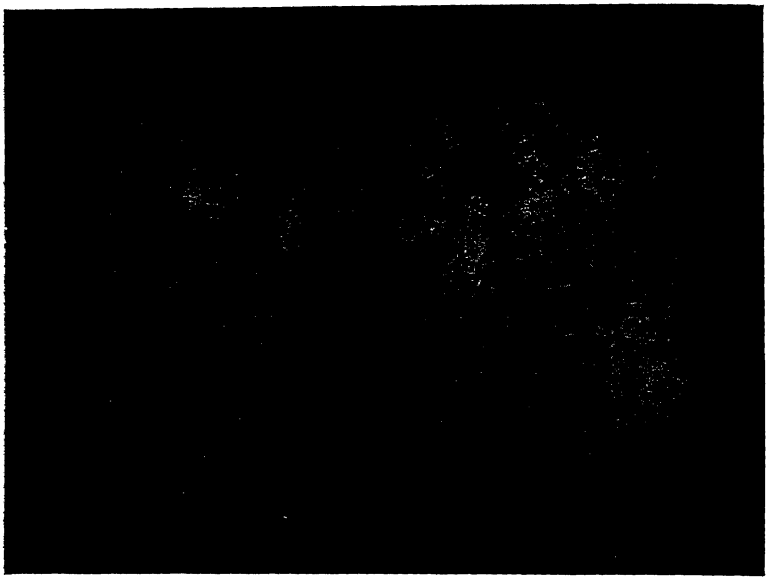


FIGURE 135
Female donors. Rock relief at Lung-mēn.
—*Photo, Chavannes*

Historically, it so happened that it was the Wei dynasty which received the impact of this wave of Gothic influence in the Far East. As we saw above, this dynasty, which ruled over northern China during the whole of the fifth century, up to about 550, was Tatar, Turkish, or Mongol in race, and on entering Chinese territory brought with it a mentality and artistic conceptions foreign to the native tradition. We have shown how far certain of the fibulæ and terracottas of

the period depart from this tradition; and we have noted the predominant characteristics of the Wei artistic canon in this sphere: namely, elongation, simplicity, directness, and downrightness of form (Fig. 85, 86). But from 453 onwards Buddhism became the



FIGURE 136
Monks. Relief at Lung-mēn.
— *Photo, Chavannes*

state religion of the Wei dynasty, the sovereigns of which now displayed a fervent zeal in the cause of this great Indian creed. Thus the " Buddhist Gothic " æsthetic canon, if we may be permitted so to call it, was so fortunate as to find in the Far East what was in some sense virgin soil, for it was received by a fresh and remarkably receptive people which had not had time to let itself be permeated by the native Chinese tradition and which seems, indeed, to have been

predisposed by its Nordic personal temperament to enter into the tendencies of Buddhist "mediævalism." [1]

According to Professor Sirén, who, following in the steps of Monsieur Chavannes, has made a thorough study of the Buddhist sculpture of the Wei dynasty (about 386 to 557), this school had four principal centres: that illustrated by the caves of Yun-kang, near Ta-t'ung in Shan-si, that of Lung-mēn, near Ho-nan Fu and Kung-hsien in Ho-nan, that of Shen-si, and that of Pe-chih-li.

The Wei style of the reliefs of Yun-kang, which is by far the most important of these centres, is typified by its collections of Buddhas, mostly seated, either in the Indian fashion or else with crossed legs on a seat in the Greco-Roman fashion, which occupy an intermediate position between the art of Gandhāra and the Kūshān art of Mathurā. From the former of these they derive the general principles of their construction, which is of hackneyed academic character, and their equally classical treatment of drapery. But, as in the art of Mathurā under the Kūshān dynasty, the folds of the garments are, as a rule, indicated by a schematic linear device, whose very simplicity lends them a sort of spiritual tranquillity. The draperies were copied on traditional lines, and continued to be so copied for centuries, but in future it was understood that this was due to a mere convention. Not that the artist intended to reveal the softness of the nude through the drapery, as was done by Gupta art. On the contrary, on coming in contact with the China of the Confucian age Buddhist art was to lose all touch with the nude, the Greek drapery becoming as opaque as the garments of the Chinese figures of the Wei and T'ang periods, to which it became assimilated. Quite suddenly, as in Byzantine or Roman art, plastic form disappeared from beneath the garment. Yet this Byzantine and Roman conventionalization does not seem to have

[1] For the influence of Wei sculpture in Japan see Professor Langdon Warner's beautiful book: *Japanese Sculpture of the Suiko Period*, published by the Cleveland Museum of Art (Yale University Press, 1923), with 145 plates.

appeared quite at once. The Buddhas and bodhisattvas of Yun-kang are often no more than a lighter variety of the Gandhārian style (cf. Fig. 131 and 132). What they retain of the Hellenic canon is, not the parade of plastic form, which would not be in keeping with

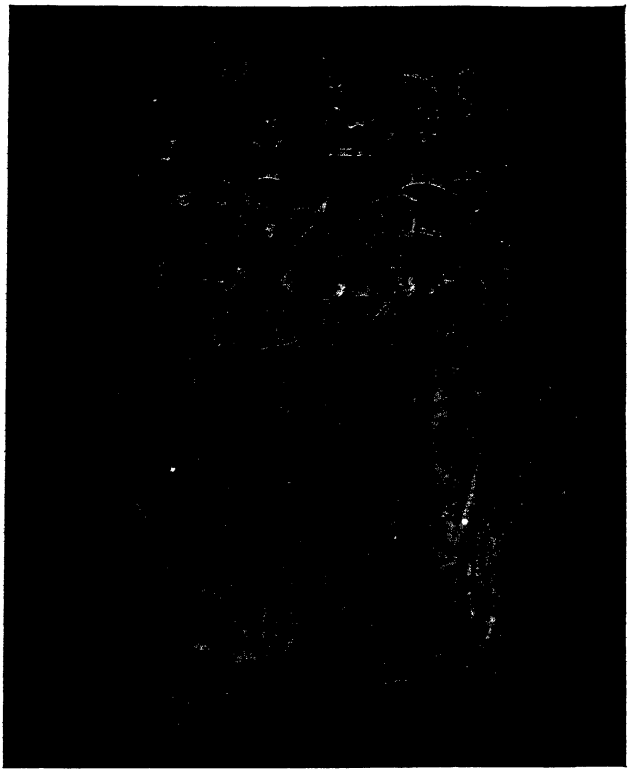


FIGURE 137
Donors. Relief at Lung-mēn.
— *Photo, Chavannes*

their spiritual quality, but the memory and general lessons of its plastic convention, the regular balance of masses. Moreover, their seated position — whether with the feet crossed in the Western fashion, or squatting on the ground in the Indian fashion — renders all

anatomical effects superfluous. Thus they succeed without effort in embodying a singularly happy convention. The simplified folds of the drapery, the softness of the forms, emancipated from Greco-Roman materialism without relapsing into conventionalism, the slenderness of the bust, the youthful elegance of expression, the

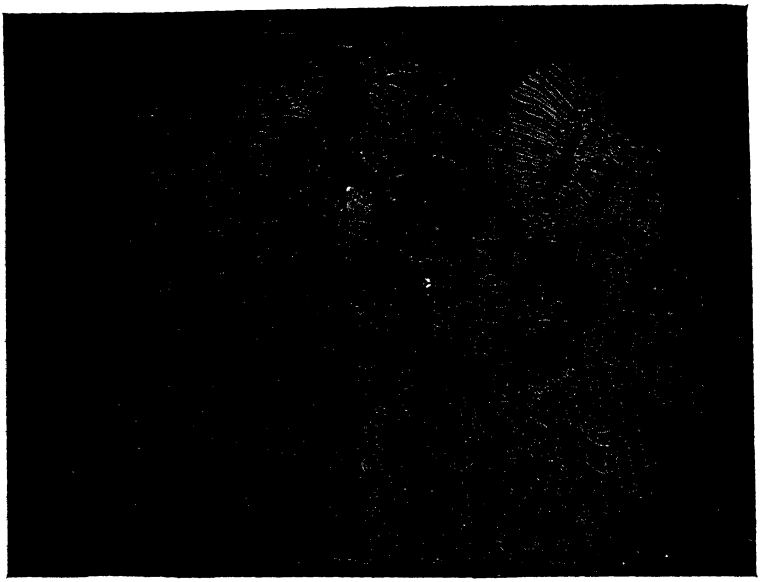


FIGURE 138
Donors. Relief at Lung-mēn.
— *Photo, Chavannes*

brooding peace of the whole attitude, make these visions quite a striking artistic " success." A profound charm emanates from them, which Chinese Buddhist art was rarely to recapture (Fig. 132–134).[1] The Wei bodhisattva in sandstone, nearly five feet in height, in the Musée Cernuschi, seated in the European fashion, belongs to this type, and so does the well-known standing Buddha in the Louvre, with the hands in the *abhaya* and *vara mudrās* (gestures of reassur-

[1] Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, I, Pl. 47, 50, 51, 52, 55, 57, 58, 60, 66.

ance and giving), formerly the property of Monsieur Charles Vignier (Fig. 151).

The Lung-mēn group must have made its first appearance towards 495, when the Wei sovereigns moved their capital from the neighbourhood of Ta-t'ung to Ho-nan Fu and turned the caves of Lung-mēn into Buddhist crypts. This second phase of Wei art is marked by a hieratic elongation of form, exaggerated to the point of aridity [1] (Fig. 140–145); and we may here recall Professor Salmony's comparison of these figures with those of the churches of Saint Pierre at Moissac, Saint Pierre at Angoulême, Neuilly-en-Donjon, the Madeleine at Vézelay, Saint Lazare at Autun, and the Romanesque portal at Chartres.[2] The process of evolution which had started at Yun-kang is now complete, the forms having now been emptied of their plastic content; while the angular drapery, with its great conventional folds, has become no more than a symbol of the monastic cloak, venerated as such. This is an essentially mystic art and, what is more, a most impressive one, for its hieratic quality speaks directly to the soul, transcending all form, which is here reduced to its most simplified mode of expression. It is a very high form of religious art, in which even stiffness and ungainliness become beauty — an art which can hold its own as equal and equivalent in universal æsthetic value to the best Romanesque of western Europe and the finest Byzantine.

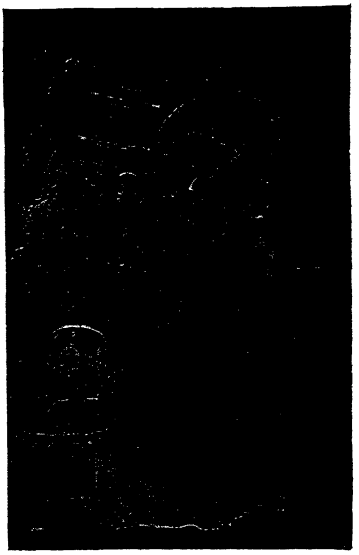


FIGURE 138b
Kaśyapa. Relief at Lung-mēn (sixth century).
— *Photo, Chavannes*

[1] Ibid., Pl. 77–80, 92, 94, 109, 112.

[2] Salmony: *Europa-Ostasien.*

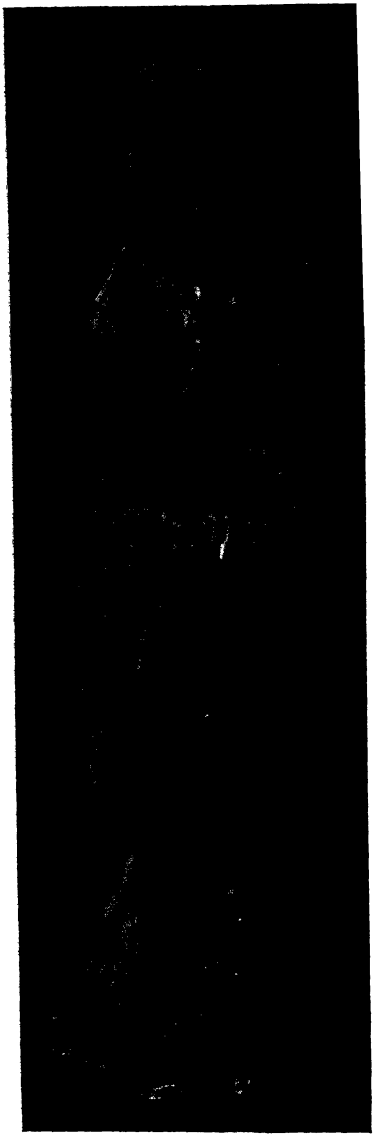


FIGURE 139
Terracotta, probably Wei.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

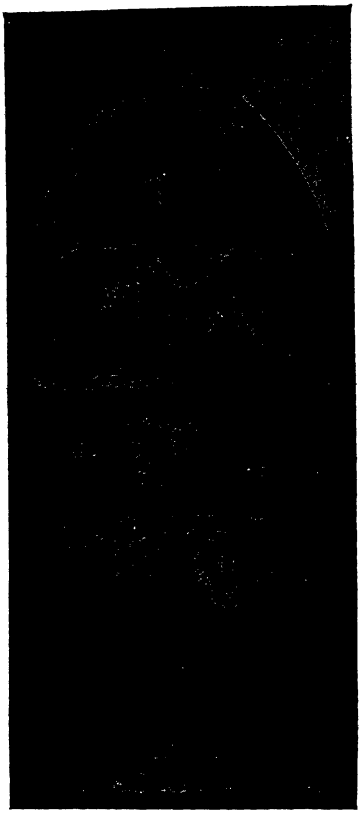


FIGURE 140
Wei stele, A.D. 527.
— *Loo collection. Photo, C. T. Loo*

Inspired by such an exalted mystical impulse as this, the endless repetition of similar figures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas in the secondary niches surrounding the principal ones acquires its full

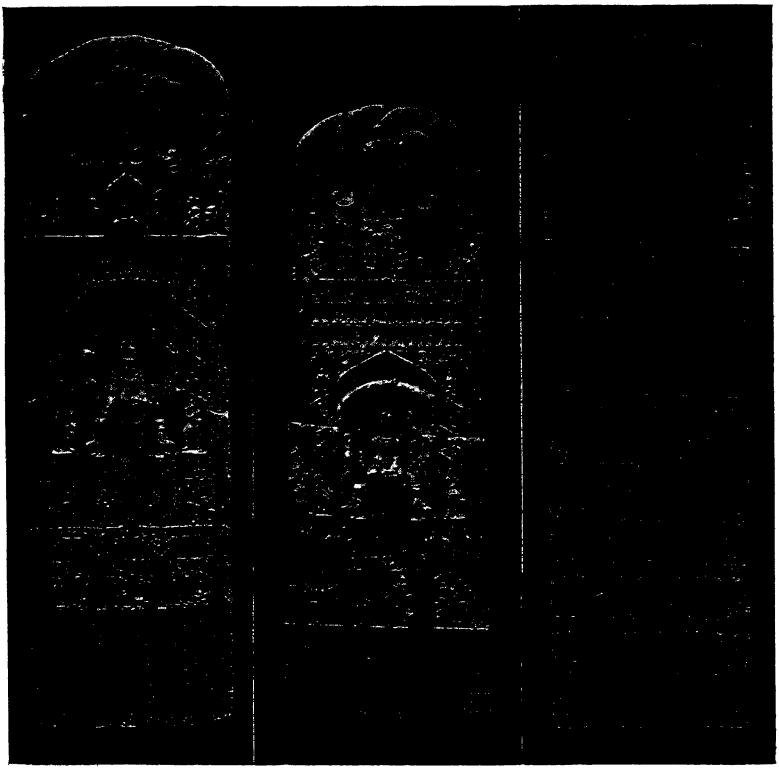


FIGURE 141
Wei stele, A.D. 528–529.
— *Loo collection.*
Photo, C. T. Loo

FIGURE 143
Wei stele, A.D. 529.
— *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photo, Sirén*

FIGURE 142
Wei stele, A.D. 528–529.
— *Loo collection.*
Photo, C. T. Loo

value. Thanks to the angular and conventionalized forms of all the figures, these repetitions, which become so tedious in schools of art with a more plastic tendency, assume a theological significance which is strangely moving.

By courtesy of Professor Sirén and Monsieur C. T. Loo we give here a few photographs of votive stelæ in this style from the Loo collection, one of which, dated 529, has been acquired by the Boston Museum (Fig. 143). They are all the more interesting in that we see in them the fusion of two styles of art — we might almost say, of two æsthetic ideals: on the one hand, the "Buddhist Romanesque" defined above, exemplified in the figures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas; and, on the other hand, the old native national art of the Han funeral reliefs of Shantung, exemplified in the representations of suppliants, donors, and non-sacred characters, with the added peculiarity that the equestrian groups, in particular, approximate to the Wei terracottas mentioned above (Fig. 143–144) in certain distinctive points, the horses being draped in very long caparisons and having fore-quarters considerably taller than their hind quarters. These two manners are characteristic, not only of the stelæ of Ho-nan, but also, after a certain date, of those of the other Wei provinces, as is shown by the well-known grey limestone stele nearly seven feet high, and dated 554, from Shan-si, now in the Boston Museum, which we are allowed to reproduce here by courtesy of the former owner, Monsieur C. T. Loo (Fig. 144).

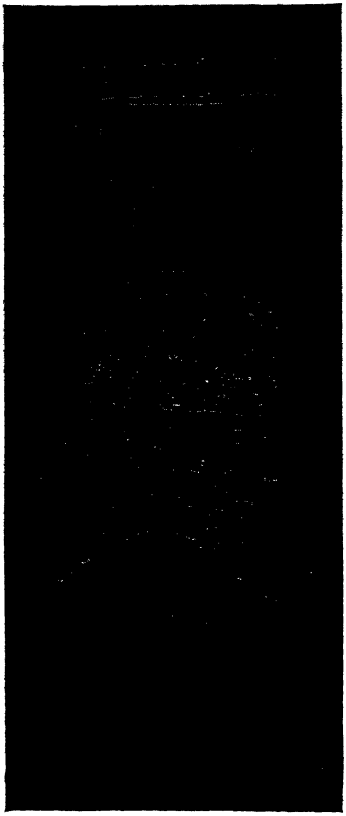


FIGURE 144
Stele dated A.D. 554.
— *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photo, C. T. Loo*

As to sculpture in the round — a term which we always employ with the reservation that, as Professor Elisséev has pointed out, ancient Chino-Japanese Buddhist statues were always intended to be

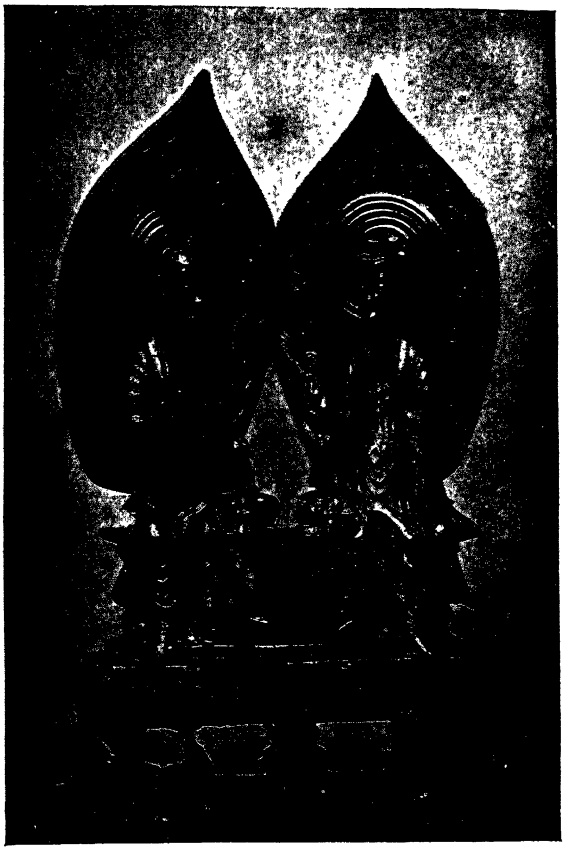


FIGURE 145
Gilt bronze Buddhas (A.D. 518).
— *Louvre. Archives photographiques*

shown against a back-piece — we need only mention the well-known seated bodhisattva in this same style, wearing a long, narrow scarf and making the *abhaya mudrā* (gesture of reassurance), a grey lime-

stone figure six feet two inches high, found at Pai-ma-ssŭ near Lo-yang, now in the Boston Museum (Fig. 152).[1]

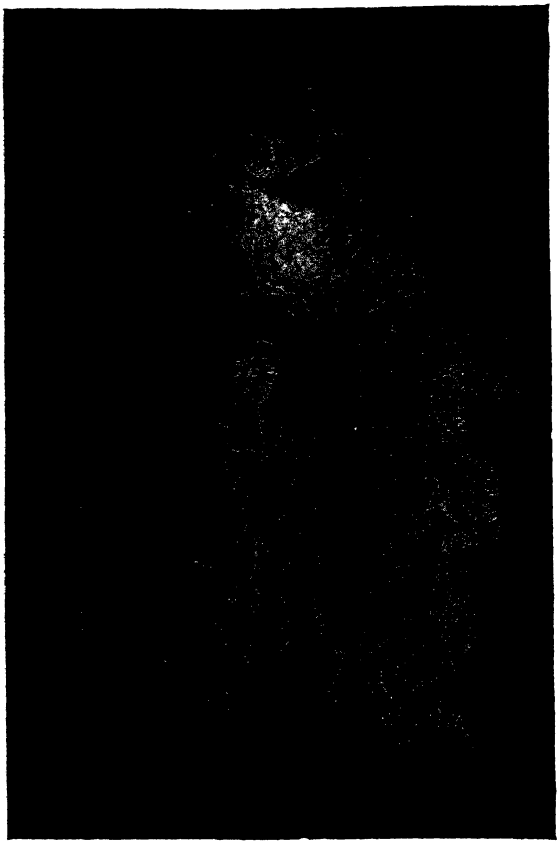


FIGURE 146
Wei stele, sixth century.
— *Louvre. Arlines photographiques*

The Wei school of Shen-si is represented by a certain number of stelæ and statues in the European collections.[2] No doubt the peculiar elegance of these works is explained by the fact that we are here

[1] Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, I, Pl. 112.

[2] Ibid., I, Pl. 135, 136, etc.

concerned with separate sculptures and not with great architectural compositions as a whole. No doubt, too, we still find a sort of lingering "mediæval" conventionalization, which reminds us sometimes of Romanesque and sometimes of Gothic. But beneath the immense pointed aureole against which they stand, these statues are still an

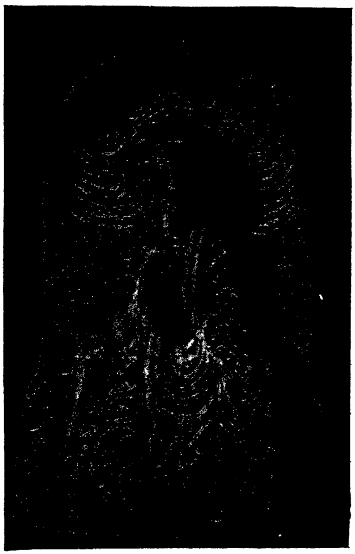


FIGURE 147
Wei stele.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*



FIGURE 148
Statue of Maitreya (?)

embodiment of pure spirituality. The drapery falls in folds disposed in a conventionally geometrical fashion; but, while preserving their purely mystical character, the forms often assume a pleasing softness instead of the angular hardness of Lung-mēn; while the folds of the mantle, instead of ending in great stiff angular lines, die away in little rounded waves.[1] The most typical specimen of this style is the

[1] Ibid., Pl. 138, 142.

fine grey limestone stele, just over four feet in height, in the Gualino collection, formerly in the possession of Monsieur Charles Vignier (Fig. 150). On the other hand, the stelæ and " altar groups " of Pe-chih-li seem to display a far more angular and flamboyant Gothic quality.

After 550 the place of the Wei dynasties in northern China was

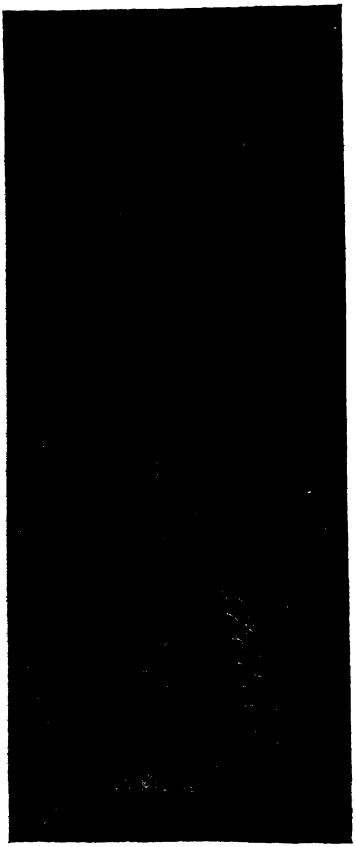


FIGURE 149
Wei stele.
— Loo collection. Photo, Loo

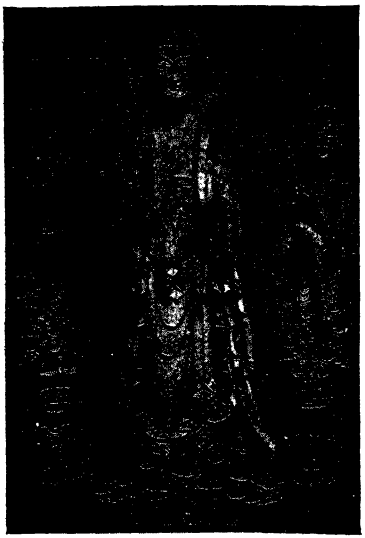


FIGURE 150
Śākyamuni between Kuan-yin and Maitreya.
— Gualino collection, Turin. Formerly in the Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier

taken by ephemeral local houses, the Pei-Ch'i (Ts'i) and the Pei-Chóu, which reigned from about 550 to 580. The importance of this brief transition period in Chinese sculpture has been well brought out by Professor Sirén, who shows how the body now threw off the tram-

mels of conventionalism and returned to far more solid forms. This is notably so in the caves of the earlier period at T'ien-lung-shan in Shan-si, with their statues of the Buddha in which the solidity of construction and breadth of proportion are softened only by the smooth simplicity of the modelling and the quiet fall of the drapery, with its

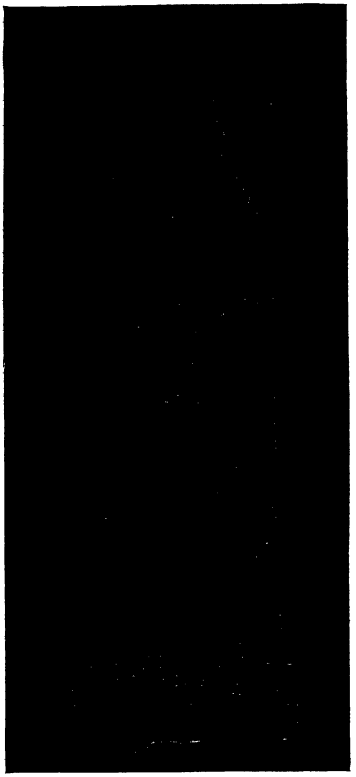


FIGURE 151
Wei Buddha.
— *Louvre. Photo, Vignier*

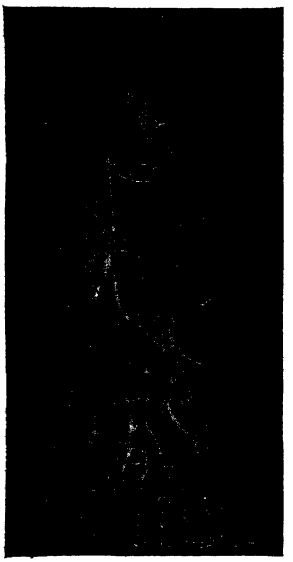


FIGURE 152
Wei bodhisattva from the Pai-ma-ssŭ (White Horse Temple)
— *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photo, Sirén*

regular, childish little scallops.[1] Here we abandon the "Romanesque" hieratic style of Wei art for a Chinese adaptation of the art of Gandhāra and of the Kūshān art of Mathurā. Only the bodhisattvas and saints who surround the Buddha are still sheathed in the rigid

[1] Ibid., II, Pl. 209–214.

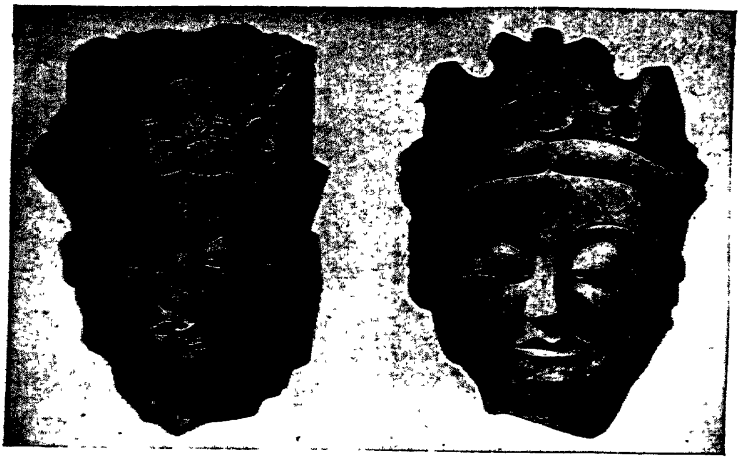


FIGURE 153

Heads of Wei bodhisattvas.
— *University Museum, Philadelphia.*
Photo, Sirén

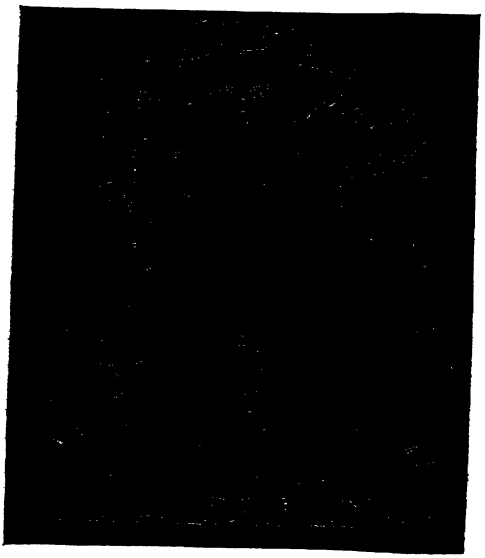


FIGURE 154

Pei-Ch'i or Pei-Chóu bodhisattvas.
— *Li collection, Seoul. Photo, Sirén*

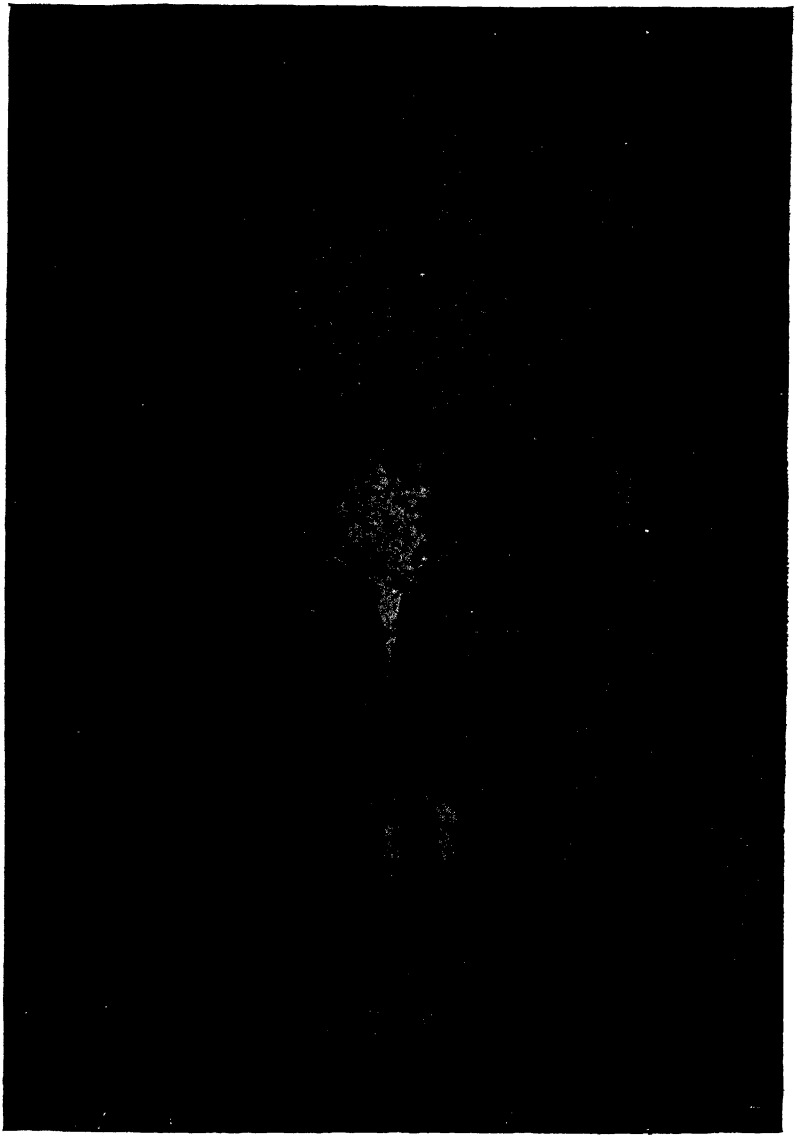


FIGURE 155

Head of a bodhisattva, Sui period.
— *Stoclet collection. By courtesy of M. Stoclet*

folds of the monastic cloak, which ends in large folds of a conventionalized and angular order. Owing to this comparative fullness of form — or else to the fact that the figures in relief on the altars and stelæ now stand out more and more in the round — the "Romanesque" impression of the preceding period is often replaced by one more "Gothic" in character,[1] as can be seen on the votive stele in the Freer Gallery, Washington, dated 562, and on that of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence. This impression is even stronger when we come to statues frankly in the round, such as the bodhisattva dated 570 in the Art Museum, Minneapolis, the Padmapāṇi in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the bronze from Fung-siang in the Field Museum, Chicago.[2] This is no doubt partly due to the features in which the costume recalls that of Gothic figures: for instance, the garments with closely pleated folds, adorned with great hanging lappets and ending in pointed flaps, the scarfs, which are also elongated into a sort of pointed wings, the highly ornate high headdresses, and the great aureoles ending in a flame-like point. Again, in spite of the deliberately conventional style, which means that here, too, three parts of the statue are made up of the monastic cloak, we find in these figures a certain revival of plastic qualities. But the "Gothic" impression which they produce is also due to the spirit inspiring them, to an all-pervading piety analogous to that of the Middle Ages in western Europe: these figures of Kuan-yin and Amitābha, with their ritual gestures, unchanging and, to all appearance, immobile, expressing a doctrinally authoritative spirit in their very gestures (*mudrās*) of compassion, are works as genuinely theological and dogmatic in their inspiration as any statue of a "beautiful God" on a French Gothic cathedral (Fig. 154).

[1] Ibid., II, Pl. 245 and 257.

[2] Ibid., II, Pl. 273, 274, 280 b.

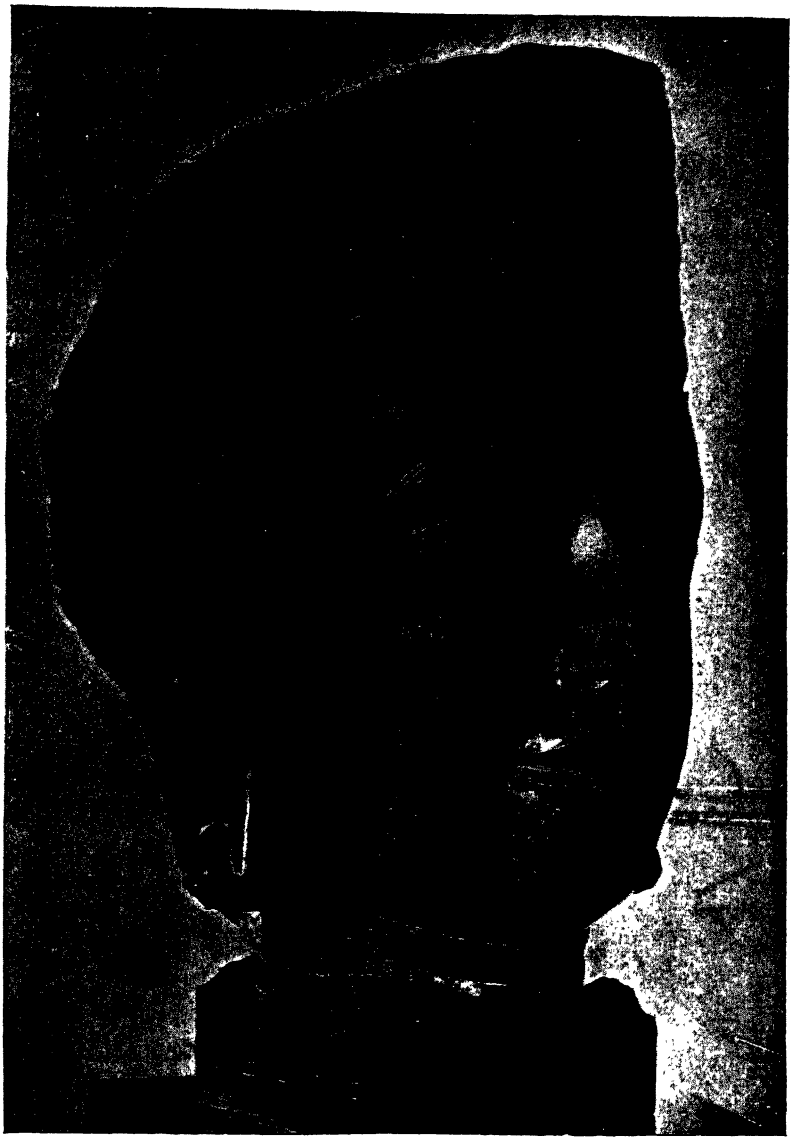


FIGURE 156

Head of a bodhisattva, Sui period.
— Doucet collection. By courtesy of M. Doucet

BUDDHISM IN THE SUI PERIOD

IN 589 TOOK PLACE A HISTORICAL EVENT WHICH WAS TO SHAPE THE course of the next three centuries in China, when the Sui dynasty put an end to the division of the country which had lasted for two

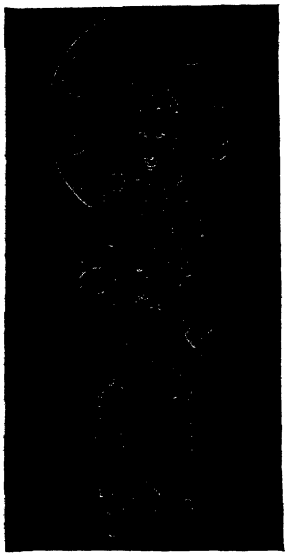


FIGURE 157
Sui bodhisattva.
— *Collection of Miss Belle da Costa Green, New York. Photo, Osvald Sirén*

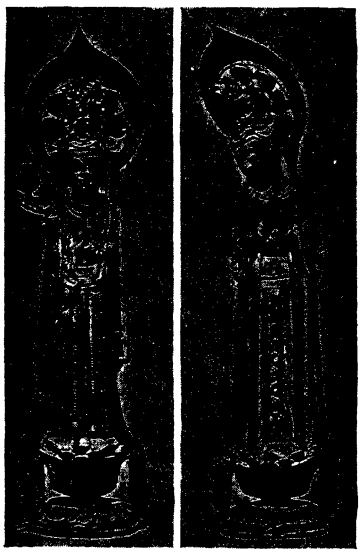


FIGURE 158
Two Sui bodhisattvas, bronze (593).
— *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photo, Osvald Sirén*

centuries, and restored Chinese unity. This restoration of the empire survived the ephemeral Sui dynasty (589–618) and lasted for the whole duration of the great T'ang dynasty (618–907).

Thus the Sui dynasty reigned only for some thirty years; but this brief period, which was marked, moreover, by the splendour and follies of Yang-ti, the " Chinese Xerxes," who reigned from 605 to

617, seems to have been most important in the history of Buddhist culture.[1] The Sui dynasty was of northern descent and was therefore heir to the religious and artistic traditions of the Wei dynasty. But at the same time its triumphant imperialism bore witness to a dauntless energy characteristic of a civilization at its height; and this is precisely what the Sui period stood for: the culminating point of Wei " Gothic." After the still tentative " Romanesque " of Yun-kang and the conventionalized " Romanesque " of the earlier style of Lung-mēn, we now come to an art comparable to that of Reims, Amiens, and Notre-Dame, in all its majesty and plenitude of power.

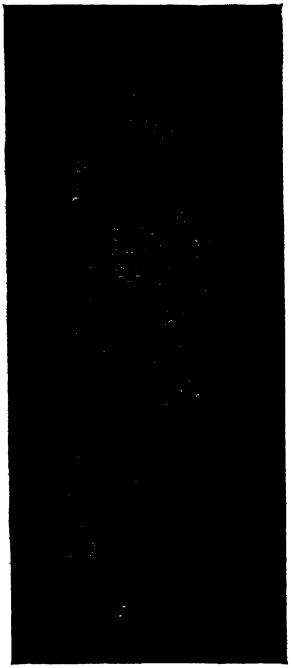


FIGURE 159
Sui bodhisattva.
— *University Museum, Philadelphia. Photo, Osvald Sirén*

Plastic form now came into its own again, and sculpture in the round was treated with complete mastery by sculptors conscious of their own powers, and possessing a feeling for beauty of form equal to that of any artist of Sārnāth or Gandhāra. But this beauty remained the handmaid of the divine, this strength and mastery would place itself at the service of none but the most intensely religious sentiment, and this plastic quality was still permeated by a gravely contemplative spirit. The two heads of bodhisattvas wearing the high tiara in the Stoclet and Doucet collections, which we here reproduce (Fig. 155, 156), may, indeed, be compared with the noblest figures of the thirteenth century in western Europe — that age of great sculpture, at

[1] See Leigh Ashton: *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture* (London, 1924), p. 67.

once mystical and classic. Could a more delicate charm emanate from any Virgin on a Gothic cathedral than from the elegant grey



FIGURES 160, 161

Two Yüan bodhisattvas, with reminiscences of the Sui style.

— *Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne. By courtesy of Herr Alfred Salmony. Photo, Sirén*

limestone bodhisattva, about a yard high, in the Freer Gallery, Washington, with its long, slender form, in which the human body becomes a mere falling drapery, its soft, smooth face, half-closed eyes, and

faint smile, at once precise and candid, its immense circular aureole adorned with the seven Buddhas of the past, and holding in its raised right hand, with a gesture full of preciosity, the ineffable Jewel

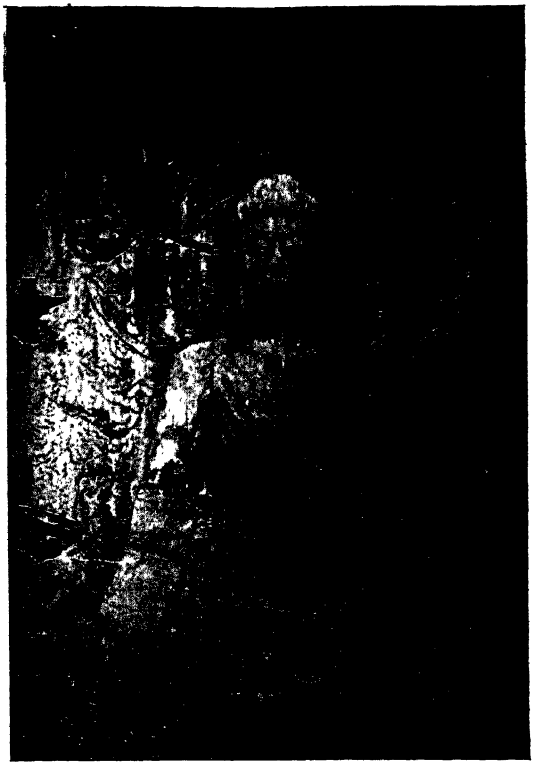


FIGURE 162
Colossal Buddha of Lung-mēn, A.D. 672–676.
— *Photo, Chavannes*

of Religion[1] (cf. Fig. 157)? There are other Sui statues of bodhisattvas in full relief, in rather a different manner, which, in the grandeur and amplitude of their presence and their rather cold natural majesty, suggest the " Gothic classicism " of Amiens.

[1] Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, II, 307.

This is true of the two very fine statues of bodhisattvas, standing very upright in the drooping simplicity of their robe, which is enhanced by the elegance of the double scarf, the wide necklace of ornaments with pendants, and the long chain of jewels knotted in front.

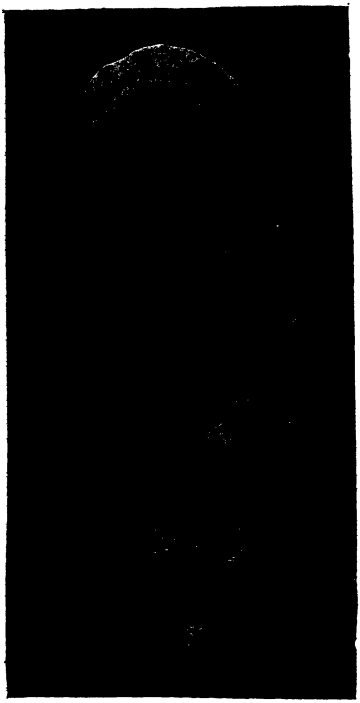


FIGURE 163
Head of a *lokapāla*, T'ang style, from Lung-mēn.
— *Musée Guimet, Wannieck donation. Photo, Gauthier*

One of these, a limestone figure about six feet four inches high, from the neighbourhood of Chang-te, in Ho-nan, is now to be found in the University Museum, Philadelphia (Fig. 159); the other, a limestone figure about six feet high, is the property of Mrs. Eugene Meyer, Junior, of Washington.[1] And if we pass on to the altar groups, a similar impression is produced by the well-known bronze, about two feet high, dating from 593, which has passed from the Tuan Fang collection into the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.[2] Beneath the branches of the great tree on which rest the Buddhas of the past, the central Buddha, seated in the lotus, with the right shoulder bared in the Indian fashion, would be an absolutely Gupta figure were it not for the flamboyant aureole which assigns him a place in the scale of " Gothic " values. The two apostles and the two youthful monks who stand round him are also of a happy simplicity. But the most charming figures of all are the two detached bodhisattvas to the right and the left, with their great

[1] Ibid., III, 271, 273.

[2] Ibid., II, 319, 320, 321.

circular and pointed aureoles, their drooping scarfs, and the delightful naïveté and simple candour of their gestures, one of whom is daintily holding a fruit, the other standing with his head slightly inclined and his hands joined in an attitude of infant piety (Fig. 158). Side by side with this group, with its spirit of youthful freshness, we find a statue of a monk holding the *patra* (alms-bowl), a marble figure, about a yard high, from the former Goloubew collection, perhaps representing Ānanda, which, with its contemplative air and atmosphere of grave fervour, is one of the most powerful and moving works that remain to us of the religious sculpture of all ages.[1]

BUDDHIST SCULPTURE OF THE T'ANG PERIOD

IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE THE T'ANG PERIOD (618–907) STANDS, above all, for the power of China. At home, it was governed by a series of extraordinarily strong personalities: Li Shih-min, the emperor T'ai-tsung (627–649), the greatest sovereign in Chinese history, the terrible empress Wu Tsē-t'ien (684–705), the emperor Hsüan-tsung or Ming-huang (713–755), a splendid Mæcenas who ended by leaving behind him an imperishable and legendary renown due to the misfortunes of his closing years. Abroad, this was the age of China's epic exploits in Asia. Under T'ai-tsung the Chinese armies conquered Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan; under Ming-huang they even overflowed into what is now Russian Turkestan and the states of the Pamir. As we have seen, all these regions of central Asia were profoundly Buddhist. Their annexation and the role which they henceforth played in imperial policy contributed towards strengthening the influence of Buddhism in China. The exchange of political embassies with the Indian kings, the journeys to the holy land of the Ganges basin made by Chinese pilgrims, such as Hsüan-

[1] Reproduced as the frontispiece to my book *Sur les traces du Bouddha* (Paris, Plon, 1929).

tsang and I-ching (Yi-tsing), and the accounts of it which they circulated on their return did still more to familiarize the spirit of China with Sanskrit culture. Thus the T'ang period is *par excellence* the Buddhist age of Chinese history.

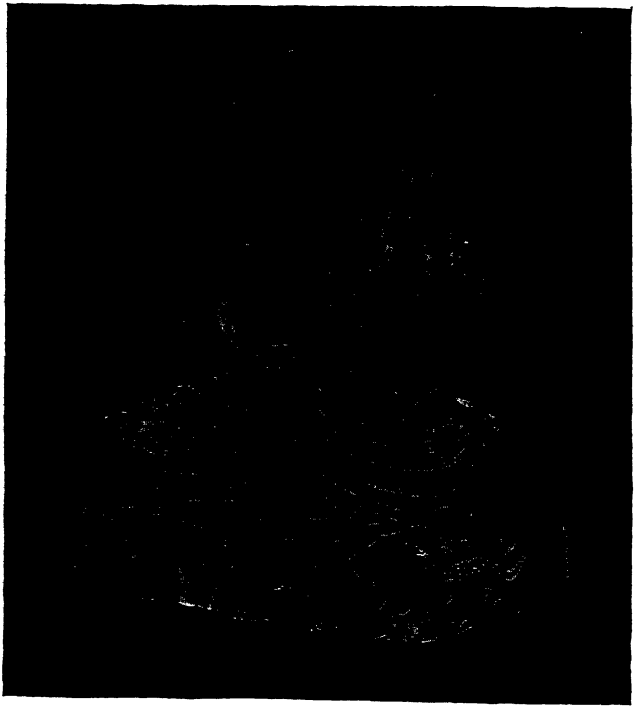


FIGURE 164
Bodhisattva from T'ien-lung-shan.
— *Musée Guimet, Lartigue mission*

Hence the æsthetic ideal of T'ang China appears under a threefold aspect: as the fruit of a century of victorious imperialism it was naturally instinct with force — no longer the restless, tumultuous, and disorderly force of the Six Dynasties, but a unitary and triumphant force. Its canon of art was therefore characterized by a parade

of muscular development and ripe fullness of form. As the product of an age of territorial expansion, and hence of curiosity about the affairs of the outside world and of a broadly receptive attitude towards them, the T'ang æsthetic ideal showed itself ready to welcome

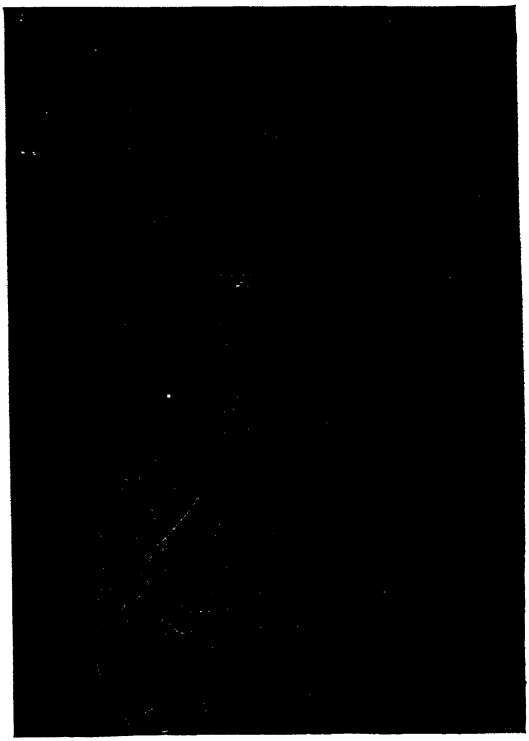


FIGURE 165
Bodhisattva from T'ien-lung-shan.
— *Photo, Sirén*

the Greek, Iranian, or Indian influences with which it came into contact at Turfān or Kūcha, Khotan or Samarqand. And finally, being dominated in the religious sphere by Buddhism, the T'ang æsthetic ideal was even foreign to the fundamental qualities of the Chinese

soul in certain respects, owing in part to this inspiration and in part to the threefold alien influence of which it was the vehicle.

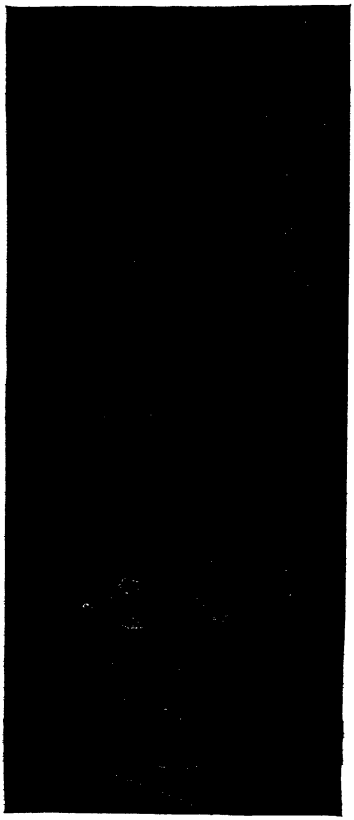


FIGURE 166
Bodhisattva at T'ien-lung-shan.
— *Photo, Sirén*

The triumph of sculpture at this period would alone suffice to justify this statement. In China, as Professor Pelliot has reminded us,[1] sculpture is not an art, but the concern of anonymous image-makers performing a pious office. The fact that under the T'ang dynasty China treated rock-reliefs or sculpture in the round on a large scale as of capital importance proves to what an extent the traditional scale of values had been upset by the influence of foreign ideas. Moreover, though the real literate class no doubt persisted in its refusal to recognize as works of art any but paintings and the products of what we unjustly call the " minor arts "; and though the T'ang sculptures are, as a matter of fact, the work of artisans and not of artists, being turned out in quantity and always anonymous, the fact remains that this very anonymity makes them interesting to the historian as expressing to a remarkable degree the characteristics of the period which we have defined above. Another reason for this is that many of them do indeed possess the quality of beauty, if not in strict accordance with the Chinese æsthetic ideal, yet at any rate, as we

[1] Lecture of May 30, 1927.

may confess without any false shame, in the eyes of the Western world.

Monsieur Sirén has attempted to distinguish between the styles of the different provinces in the Buddhist sculptures of the T'ang period.

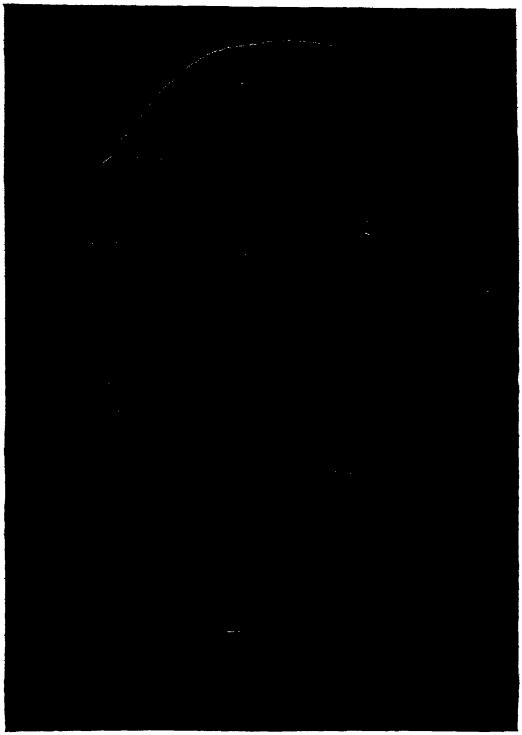


FIGURE 167
Head, T'ien-lung-shan style.
— *Wannieck collection*

But, with the exception of the Indian Gupta island of T'ien-lung-shan, these various schools are all subject to the same law as we have laid down above: that is, a thoroughgoing restoration of plastic form —

soon to be followed by an exaggeration of it — and a sense of masses. In fact, Chinese sculpture now completed the process of development from a pictorial conception to a solid one. Hence we shall find a preference for sculpture in the round, which made it possible to lay emphasis on plastic form; and a taste for realism — a frank realism, without conventions or decorative arrangement, sought after for its own sake

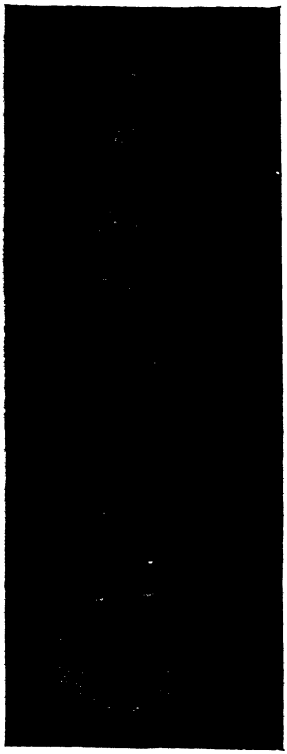


FIGURE 168

T'ang bodhisattva.
— *Palacio collection, formerly in the possession of Monsieur C. T. Loo. Photo, Loo*

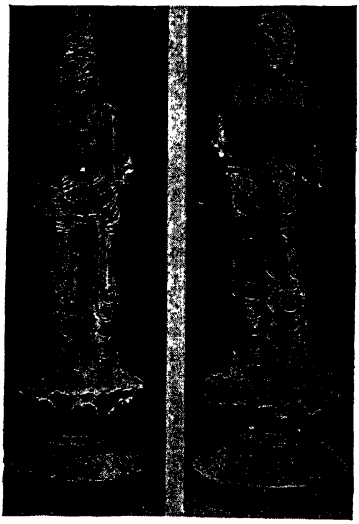


FIGURE 169

T'ang bodhisattvas.
— *University Museum, Philadelphia. Photo, Sirén*

alone, and at times asserted to the point of violence and exaggerated to the verge of caricature.

There was now an end of the " Gothic " conventionalism of Wei art, of drapery with great angular folds or ending in wave-like scal-

lops. Henceforth it is indicated by great folds which aim at realism, and not at decorative effect for its own sake, being moulded broadly upon the body, often in such a way as to show the powerful bust or thighs through the stuff. The heads of these Buddhas and bodhisattvas, too, are powerfully constructed, calm and full of an expression of

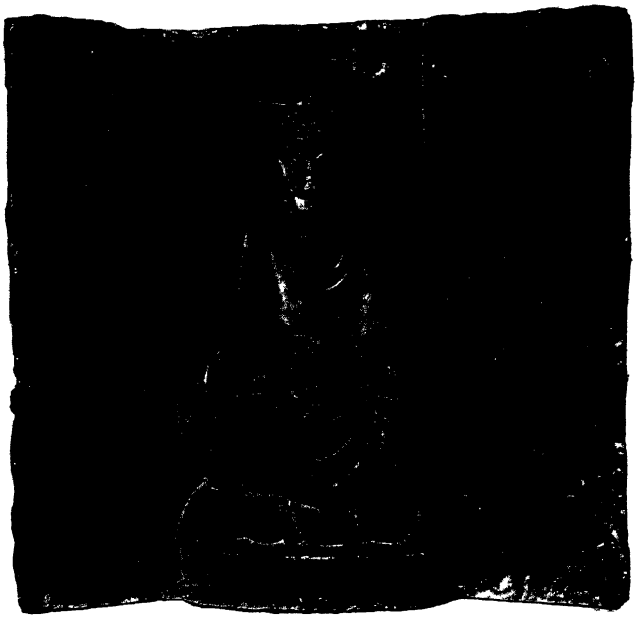


FIGURE 170
T'ang Buddha.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

vigour. Moreover, there is now an end of all mystery; for by bringing Buddhist statuary out into full daylight T'ang realism often produced an impression somewhat analogous to that of Gandhāra art. Yet, in our opinion, T'ang art is superior to that of Gandhāra in its rendering of religious emotion, for in it we no longer have an art imported from a distance and adapted to the creed of a different race under novel conditions, but one in which the process of adaptation is long since

complete, because it has long been associated with the same type of religious feeling.

Though lacking in mystical quality, the Buddhist art of the T'ang

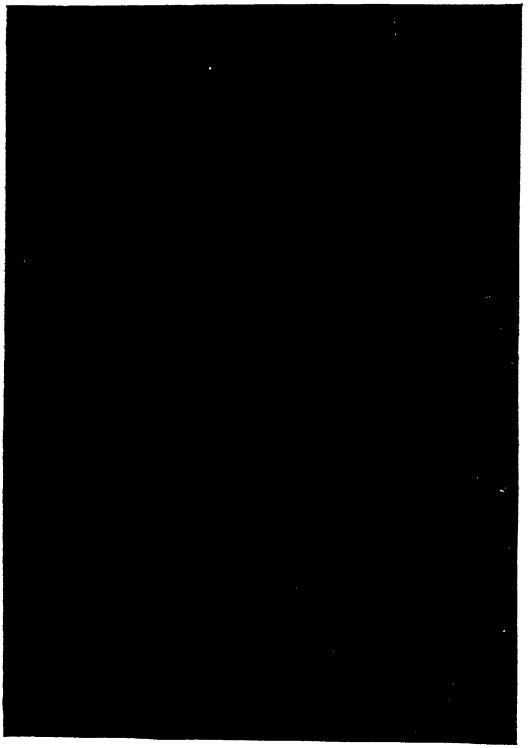


FIGURE 170b
Statue at Tun-huang.
— *Photo, Pelliot*

period, as befits the religion of a period of imperial glory, often imparts a real impression of divine majesty, strength, and peace, based upon religious conviction and dogmatic security (cf. Fig. 170).[1]

[1] For instance, a standing figure of Kuan-yin, in grey limestone, dated 706, in the University Museum, Philadelphia, reproduced by Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, III, Pl. 402.

This is notably so of the colossal Buddha of Lung-mēn, more than forty-nine feet in height, a statue carved in the rock between 672 and 676 by order of the empress Wu Tsē-t'ien (Fig. 162). The impression of overwhelming grandeur produced by this gigantic statue is obviously due more to its size than to its spiritual or artistic merit; but its effect is none the less striking. The almost equally colossal statues of disciples and bodhisattvas which surround the Buddha are, however, of the most obviously commonplace and heavy type, as are the *lokapālas* near by, with their ostentatiously athletic muscles and

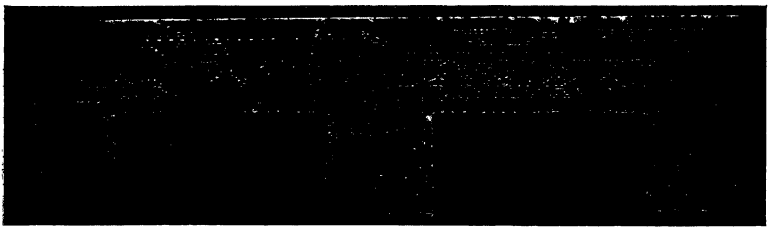


FIGURE 171
Lintel of a door. Six Dynasties or Sui.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

sensational contortions, in which we see the development of an exaggerated realism which was to be the ruin of T'ang sculpture.[1] Soon, indeed, this class of statue was to degenerate into a convention of inevitable banality, characterized by an empty violence and gesticulating insincerity which remind us of the followers of Michelangelo. It required all the originality of the Japanese to restore to these statues of *lokapālas* — or *shi-tennō*, as they were called in the Japanese islands — a real spirit of intrinsic vigour (cf. Fig. 163).

Another department in which T'ang realism was to be equally triumphant was in the heads of monks. These clean-shaven faces, seamed with wrinkles, often have all the merit as portraits of Roman

[1] Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, III, 455–7, and III, 480, 481, etc. Other figures of *lokapālas* treated in a bravura style, with anatomy reminiscent of the successors of Michelangelo, are to be found at T'ien-lung-shan: Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, IV, 487.

statues of the best period; and the balance of masses which characterized the Gandhāra school combined in them with the Chinese sense of portraiture to produce masterpieces, among which may be mentioned in particular the standing statue of white marble, about two

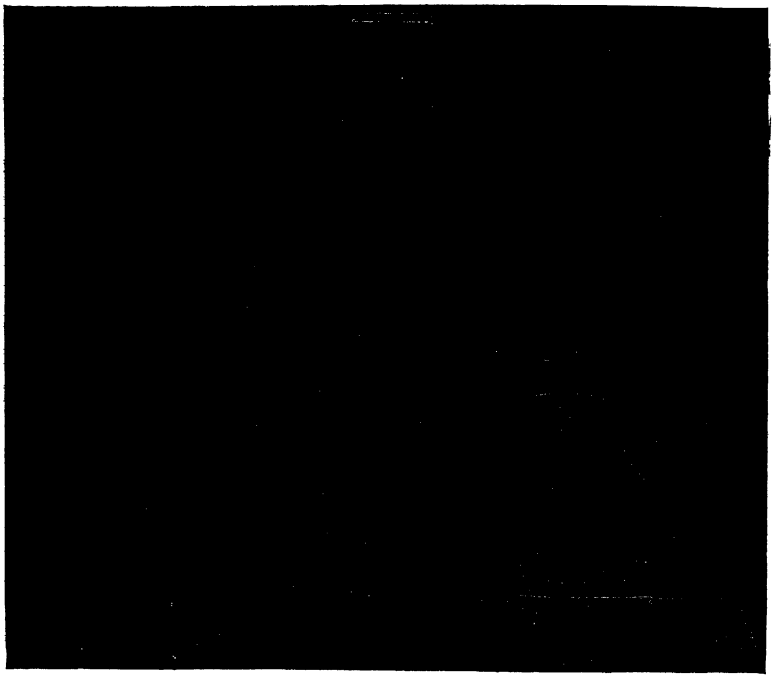


FIGURE 172
Horse on the tomb of T'ai-tsung the Great (A.D. 647).
— *From the cast in the Musée Guimet*

feet three inches high, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.[1] The Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia, has acquired a standing statue in this style of an aged priest, with a large head all shrunken and wrinkled, the eyes of an inquisitor, and a narrow chest, which can be seen through the opening of the *saṃghāṭi* (monastic mantle) with its

[1] Ibid., III, Pl. 371.

sober folds — a figure worthy to be compared with the statues of Memphite Egypt.[1] In other works — certain heads of priests or Buddhas — the solidity and regularity of construction with which

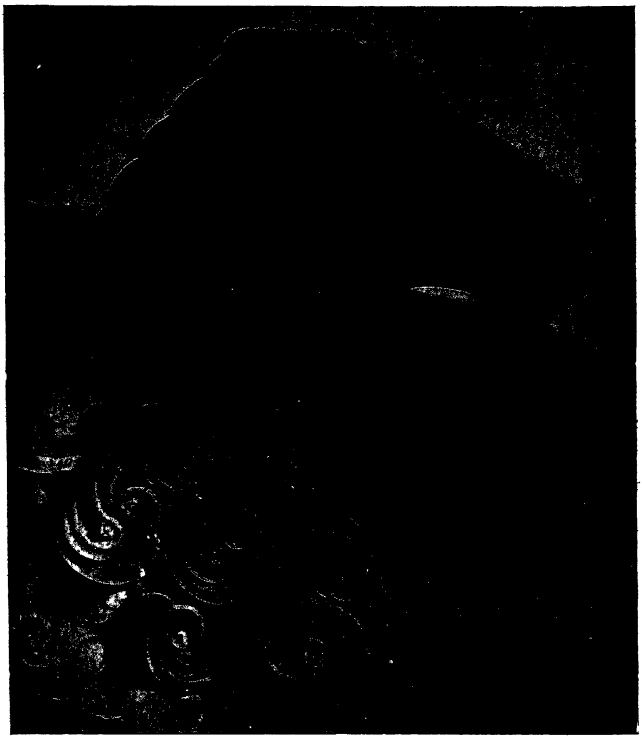


FIGURE 173

Winged horse (unicorn) on the tomb of the emperor Kao-tsung (A.D. 683).
— *Photo, Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins*

the somewhat heavy face is treated, combined with a coldness which amounts to lack of expression, lend an indefinably Neronian suggestion to the type. Thus the brute force of the T'ang age, working on

[1] Formerly in the Sirén collection. Cf. Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, III, Pl. 373.

the same Hellenistic foundation, ended by producing the same results as that of Rome.[1]

Two fine masterpieces may be cited in the same connexion to illustrate how far the infusion of Buddhist ideals often succeeded in imposing upon China an æsthetic ideal absolutely foreign to her own ideas. One of these is a headless white marble Buddha, about eight inches high, seated in the Indian fashion, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.[2] The torso, with its softly swelling breast and the marvellous modelling of the abdomen, seen through the wet-looking drapery of the garment, represents one of the most happy instances in which the melting softness of Gupta art has availed itself of the technical skill of the Gandhārian style. Yet this work, with its doubly Indian character, was found at Si-ngan-fu. Equally fine is the bodhisattva of a similar character brought back from T'ien-lung-shan to the Musée Guimet by Commandant Lartigue (Fig. 164).

T'ien-lung-shan, the group of rock temples in Shan-si which we have already mentioned, is, indeed, a most curious phenomenon to find in the T'ang period. As a result of circumstances of which we are ignorant — no doubt the arrival of a group of monks from Magadha — T'ien-lung-shan became for a time a centre of Indo-Gupta influence. By the courtesy of Monsieur Sirén we are able to reproduce a few photographs of this school (Fig. 165, 166).[3] Scarcely anything remains here of the architectural rigidity of construction of the Gandhāra school. The figures have a freedom of pose and a softness in the rendering of the nude which recall Sārnāth and the second manner at Mathurā. The drapery and scarfs seem to be wet and to cling to the body, showing the pure and sensuous beauty of the limbs through them; often, indeed, there is a bold rendering even of the nude, not only in the torsos, but also in the modelling of the abdomen. The sideward sway of the hips, which is so characteristic

[1] Ibid., III, 474.
[2] Ibid., III, 407.
[3] Ibid., IV, Pl. 488, 494, 495, 496, 501.

of Indian, and especially of Gupta, work, gives these statues a somewhat sensuous grace of which the stiff figures of the Sino-Gandhārian school showed no signs. But a slight fullness of the forms marks a

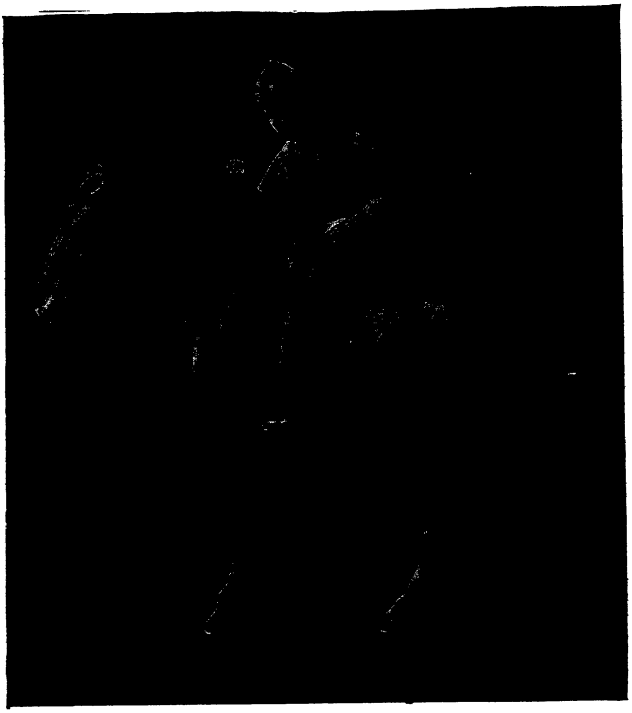


FIGURE 174
Funeral statue.
— *Musée Cernuschi. Photo, Gauthier*

departure from Gupta slenderness which, even in these distinguished works, gives warning of the approach of Sung heaviness.[1]

Moreover, it is not only at T'ien-lung-shan that Indian influence can be vouched for. There are many other standing statues of bodhi-

[1] With the artistic canon of T'ien-lung-shan may be compared certain paintings from Tun-huang, such as the Samantabhadra in the Pelliot collection, Musée Guimet.

sattvas with a purity of line and an elegance which are decidedly Gupta, or, better still, Pāla. We need only mention the fine white marble torso, just under a yard high, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, whose beauty is still further heightened by the slight sideward sway of the hips and the long, pure line of the legs seen through the wave-like lines of the drapery.[1] In this work, as in a similar grey limestone one, a few inches larger, in the Freer Gallery, Washington,[2] the torso is, moreover, almost entirely nude beneath its arrangement of scarfs and necklaces, and this reversion to the pure, slender, melting nudes of the best Indian schools warns us that here we are departing from the Chinese æsthetic ideal. And, lastly, the impression is even more direct in the well-known headless white marble statue of a standing bodhisattva, six feet high, from Pao-ting, in the collection of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller. This has now been freed from spurious additions by the judicious advice of the late Professor Migeon, and, with the bust entirely bare except for the scarf, and the delightful drapery of the skirt, with the modelling of the legs visible through it, it might almost be a torso from Sārnāth;[3] and we should indeed have to go to Sārnāth, to the Nalandā of the Pāla period, or to Mayurbhanj to find such perfect purity of style. When Chinese art takes possession of these subjects — as, for instance, in the well-known statues of standing bodhisattvas with the sideward sway of the hips in the Philadelphia Museum (Fig. 169, cf. 168)[4] — it is only to cover them with a profusion of ornaments which gives these freely treated Indian nudes the appearance of Gothic Virgins. The effect is, in our opinion, to give them a more religious spirit. But here again we already see that tendency to fullness which was to disfigure most figures of Kuan-yin in the Sung period beginning to make its appearance.

[1] Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, III, Pl. 375.
[2] Ibid., Pl. 377.
[3] Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, III, Pl. 101, A.
[4] Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, Pl. 378.

T'ANG NON-BUDDHIST SCULPTURE

As we have seen, in Buddhist art T'ang realism might be softened by certain influences of an opposite tendency, such as that of Gupta art. In non-religious sculpture, on the other hand — using

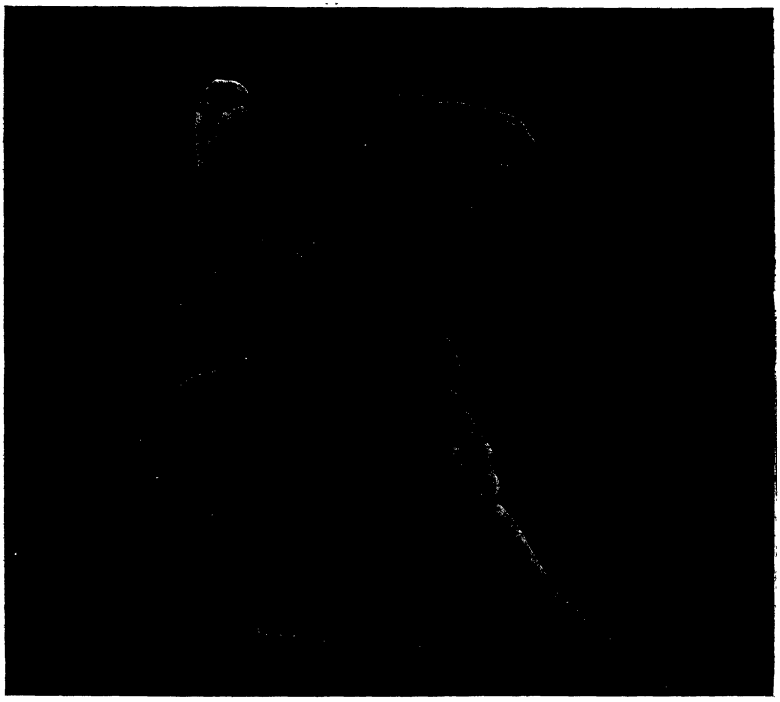


Figure 175
Funeral statue.
— *Wannieck collection*

this conventional term in the sense of works not connected with the Buddhist religion — this realism triumphed unopposed. In it we find the art of a heroic century and a warlike dynasty, an art delighting in scenes of war and animal life, an art in which force was triumphant.

The elements which went to make up this realism lay all ready to hand. From its fibulæ with interlaced animal motives down to the colossal monsters of the Liang period the art of the Six Dynasties, according to Monsieur Vignier's definition quoted above, in which



FIGURE 176
Prancing horse.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

we concurred, had displayed a seething force and pent-up energy which were only waiting to find an outlet. The plastic conventions which the China of the T'ang period took over from the Roman East and Sāsānid Iran, through Buddhist channels, provided these poten-

tial energies with a medium of expression and an ordered form. From the former point of view T'ang realism might be defined as the concrete embodiment of the energy of the Six Dynasties or as the violence of that period reduced to an ordered form (cf. Fig. 171, 182, 183). From the latter point of view T'ang art stands for the incorporation into the original Chinese substratum of the foreign elements acquired by contact with those Romano-Persian influences with which it had come in contact in central Asia. The animal and military art of the T'ang period can thus be regarded as a blend of the Six Dynasties and of the Romano-Sāsānid school.

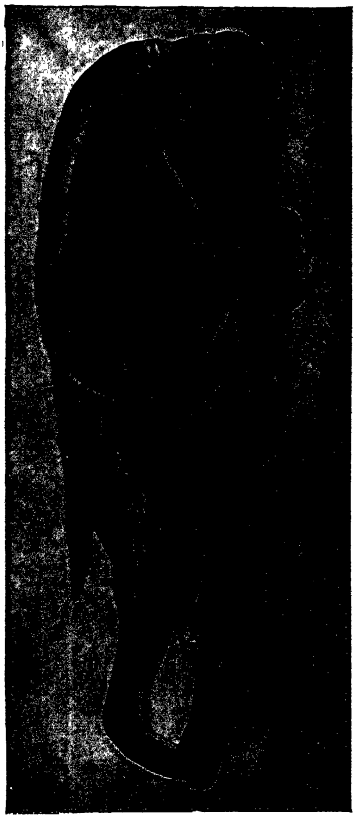


FIGURE 177
Ivory ornament.
— *Stoclet collection. By courtesy of M. Stoclet*

This fact is strikingly evident in the stone or terracotta statues or in the reliefs representing horses — a favourite subject of the T'ang artists. In future, instead of the tall chargers and elegant ambling horses of the Wei period, with the neck so curiously high in proportion to the hind quarters, we often find massive, thick-set beasts, like shire-horses, reminding us of the Sāsānid reliefs of Tāq-i Bustān, Naqsh-i Rustam, and Shāpūr (Fig. 172; cf. the Sāsānid reliefs illustrated in Volume I of the present work, Fig. 97, 98, 106, etc.). Such, for example, are the six war-horses of the emperor T'ai-tsung, represented in relief round his tomb near Li Ch'üan-hsien, in Shen-si,

and especially the one from whose breast the commander K'iou Sing-kung is plucking an arrow with which it had been wounded during

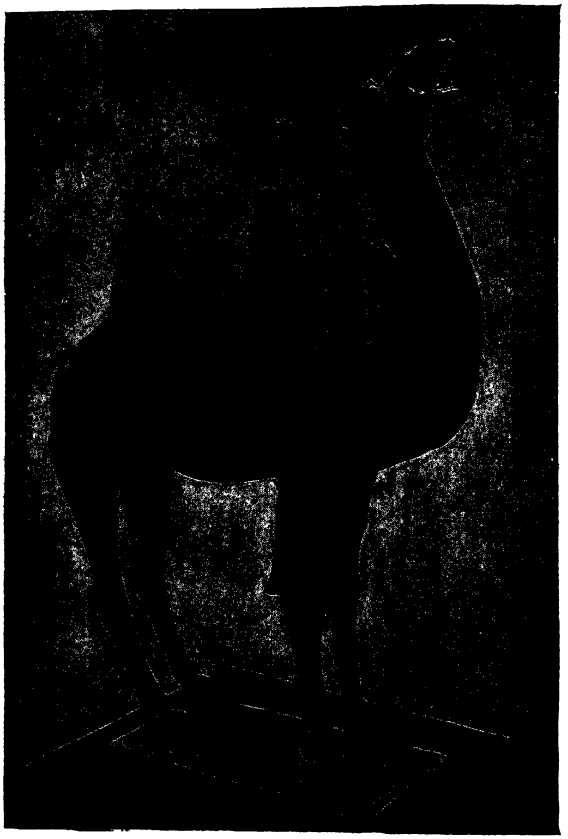


FIGURE 178
Camel.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

the battle (Fig. 172), a figure which may be compared with the charger in the great equestrian figure of Khosrau at Tāq-i Bustān.[1] Similarly the next horse, which is represented at full gallop, reminds

[1] Sarre: *Art de la Perse ancienne*, Pl. 85.

us of the galloping horses of Naqsh-i Rustam, the intermediate stage being supplied by a painting from Turfān.[1] The same remark applies to the terracotta and stucco funeral figures, for the intermediate stage between these T'ang horsemen which fill our modern collections and

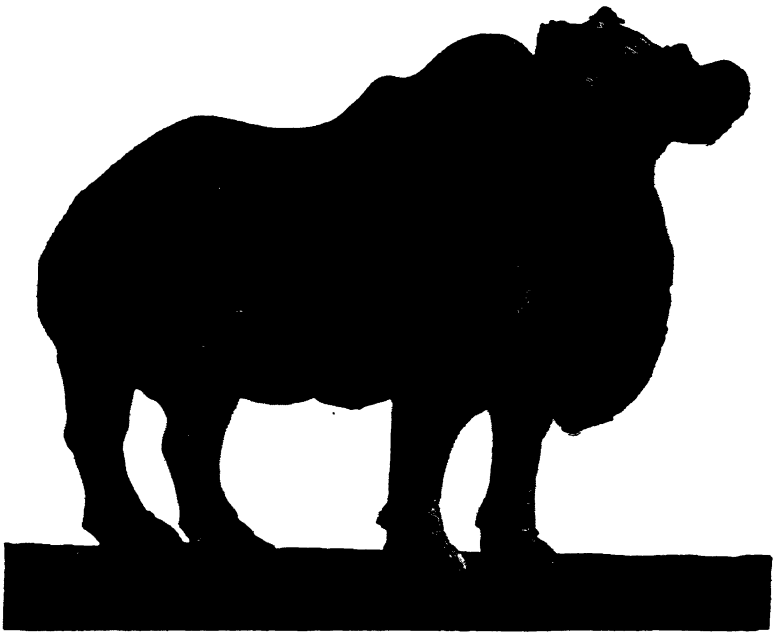


FIGURE 179
Buffalo.
— *Sauphar collection.*
Photo, Henri Martinie

the chargers of the Iranian mounted soldiery is supplied by such central Asian works as the stucco horses found by Sir Aurel Stein at Shortshuq, near Qarashar (cf. Fig. 174–176).[2]

But these Sāsānid affinities are one of the least important factors in these works. The frank realism of the T'ang artists, with their love

[1] Von Le Coq: *Buddhistische Spätantike*, III, Pl. 20.
[2] Stein: *Serindia*, IV, Pl. CXXXVI; Von Le Coq: *Bilderatlas*, Fig. 135.

of powerful forms and muscles brought fully into play, is quite sufficient to account for all these statues of war-horses neighing and prancing with impatience, or shaking their heads with a quivering

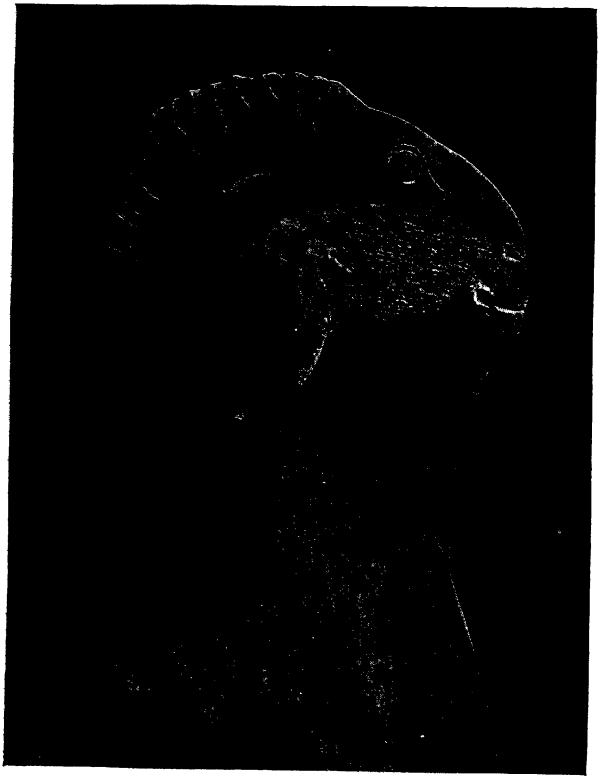


FIGURE 180
Stone ram. Six Dynasties or T'ang.
— *Von der Heydt collection. By courtesy of the Baron von der Heydt. Photo, C. T. Loo*

motion that is wonderfully lifelike, of horses abruptly reined in and half rearing, with the rider's body thrown backwards as he pulls at the rein; of horses advancing at full gallop, with the rider, whether

man or woman, bending forward over the neck to urge on the beast or deal a blow with a sabre at a prostrate enemy; and, lastly, of circus-horses, whose evolutions respond to every caprice of their woman rider.[1] We feel what a passion for the form of the horse ran through the whole of this Chinese society of the seventh and eighth centuries, accustomed as it was to furious raids across the Gobi

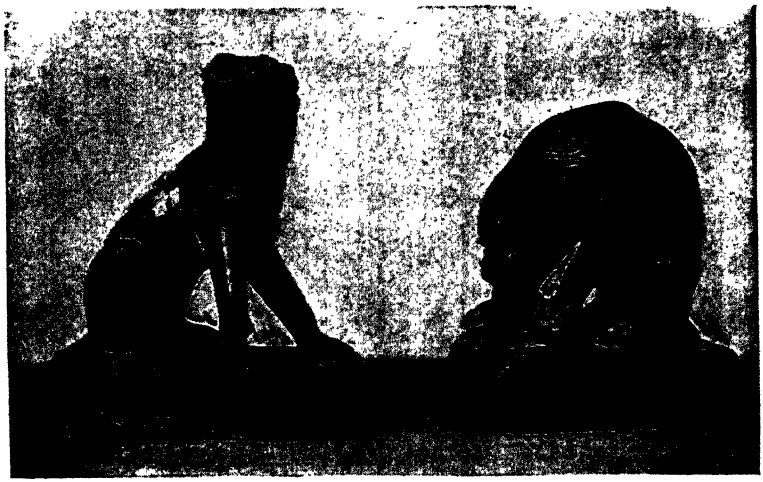


FIGURE 181
Wooden and marble statues of feline beasts.
— *Louvre. Archives photographiques*

desert, the Mongol steppe, or the oases of the Tarim. The epic history of the T'ang period comes to life before our eyes in this mounted soldiery which peoples our museums and collections (Fig. 175, 176). The same frank realism is apparent in the statues of camels in glazed terracotta, in which the animal is rendered in such lifelike fashion that we feel the regular rhythmic swing of its walk and the backward curve of its head and neck and can almost hear the leonine roar that comes from its grotesquely grimacing mouth (see the numerous

[1] O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin, 1929, *Catalogue*, Nos. 340–5, from the T. Simon, H. Gutmann, T. Bohlken, and F. Blüthgen collections.

specimens in the Eumorfopoulos collection and Fig. 178).[1] There is even greater vigour and amazing pent-up energy in two statuettes in the Louvre, six inches and six and a quarter inches high respectively,

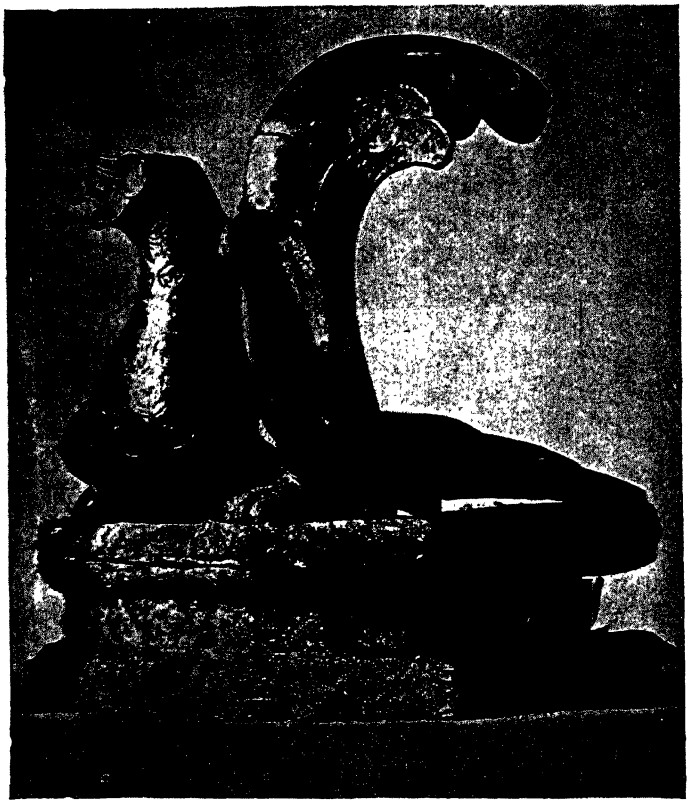


FIGURE 182
Bronze bird.
— *Musée Cernuschi*

one in limestone and the other in marble, representing lions sitting on their haunches, one tearing up a lamb, and the other turning its

[1] These may be compared with the camels passant on the decorative frescoes of Sāmarrā. See Herzfeld: *Malereien von Samarra*, Pl. LXXVI.

head in a roar (Fig. 181).[1] These are works of capital importance in that, for a fleeting moment, they achieve a perfect blend of two principles: the Sāsānid element, as illustrated in the lioness formerly in the Doucet collection (see Volume I of the present work, Fig. 109); and that of the Six Dynasties, which can here be recognized in the extraordinary potential energy expressed in the tense muscles, as well as in the dragon-like appearance of the head.



FIGURE 183
Bronze. Late Six Dynasties. — *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

The brutal realism of the T'ang period finds striking expression in the funeral statues of warriors, as well as in the Buddhist statues representing *lokapālas,* known in Chinese as *t'ien-wang,* or " rulers of the heavens," which assumed a warlike aspect in central Asia and China by virtue of their function as guardians of temples. Like their predecessors, the Wei funeral statuettes of mounted horsemen, the T'ang warriors of which so many are to be found in European collections are often true racial types, as well as portraits: at the very first glance we can distinguish the Chinese archer or pikeman, the Turkish trooper, or the Mongol mercenary. Further, the details of the arms and armour make these works invaluable historical documents (Fig. 184, 185).[2] The martial violence which animates them is still further accentuated in the statues of *lokapālas* or *dvārapālas,* in which it is often exaggerated to the point of facial distortion or grimace, as in the splendid polychrome wooden statues

[1] Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture,* III, Pl. 435.

[2] See Barthold Laufer: *Chinese Clay Figures,* Pt. I: "Prolegomena on the History of Defensive Armour," Field Museum of Natural History, Vol. XIII, No. 2, publ. 177 (Chicago, 1914).

brought back to the Musée Guimet from Tun-huang by Professor Pelliot. These statues, with their powerful build and brutal realism, in which force is insisted upon for its own sake, show better than any theory how far Chinese art had travelled since the " Gothic " of the

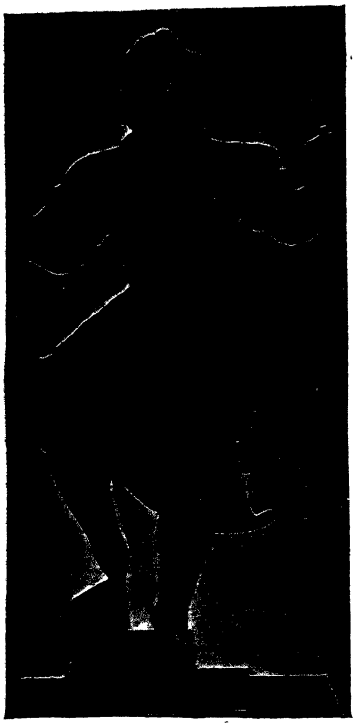


FIGURE 184

Lokapāla from Tun-huang, in painted wood. T'ang period.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

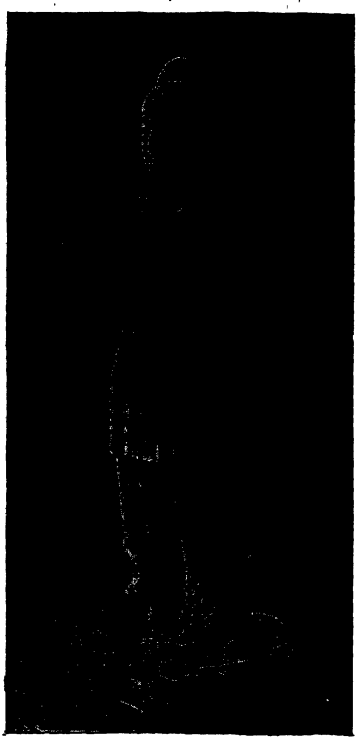


FIGURE 185

T'ang warrior.
— *Musée Guimet. Presented by the Vicomtesse de Sartiges*

Wei period. In this connexion we may point out a curious example of Gandhārian influence upon T'ang art, in the pair of *dvārapālas*, with the bust nude, belonging to the Von der Heydt collection in the Berlin Museum,[1] in which we see the same false realism in the treatment of

[1] Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, III, Pl. 89, A, B.

the muscles as in the well-known Gandhārian frieze with marine divinities now in the British Museum.[1]

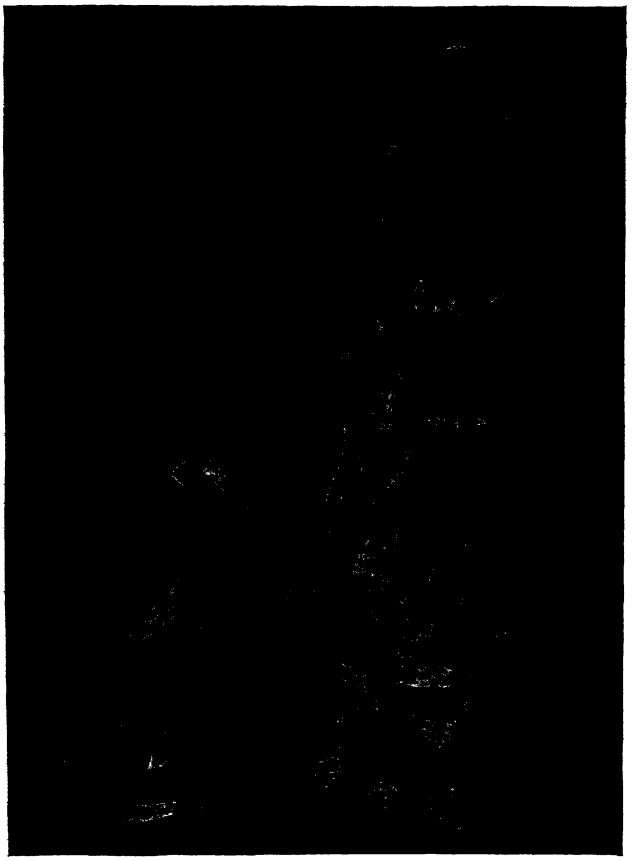


FIGURE 186
Funeral figures, Sui style.
— *Musée Cernuschi. Photo, Pivot*

The delicate little funeral figurines representing women — princesses, female attendants, ordinary middle-class women, dancing-girls, or musicians — show to a certain extent traces of a similar

[1] Foucher: *Art gréco-bouddhique*, I, 247, Fig. 126.

process of development (Fig. 187–195).[1] The fashionable young ladies of the Sui period still possessed all the slender grace of the Wei figures, to which further height was added by the exaggeration

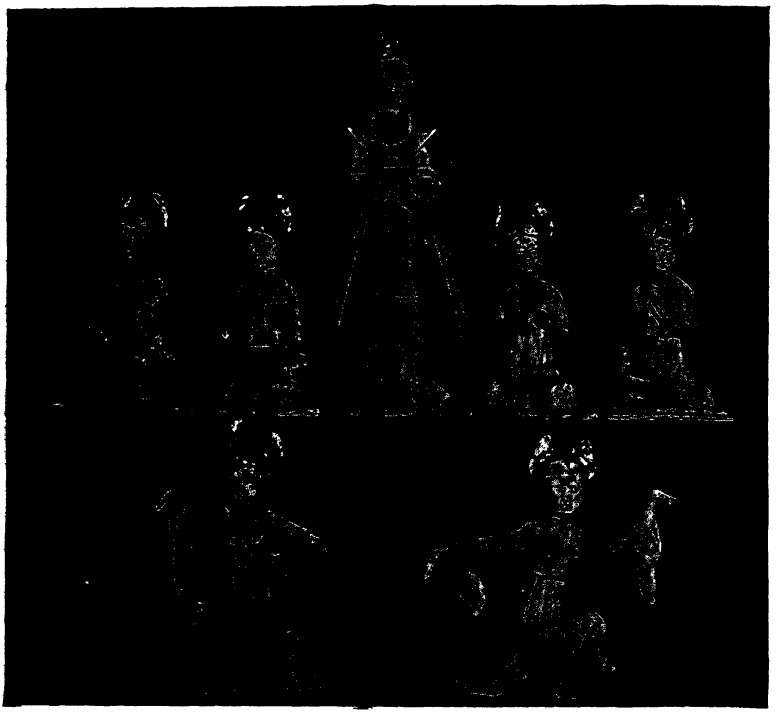


FIGURE 187
Female dancers and musicians. Sui or T'ang figurines.
— *University Museum, Philadelphia. Photo, C. T. Loo*

of elaborate fashions. Their statuettes show tight bodices, which give them a wasp-waist, while two wide lapels, extending into a sort of wing on the shoulders, and vast sleeves drooping from the wrist to the knee, still further accentuate the mincing elegance which makes them resemble the noble ladies in western European manuscripts of

[1] Cf. Sirén: *Early Chinese Arts*, III, Pl. 91, 92.

the fifteenth century (Fig. 186, 187). As a rule, the dancing-girls and musicians have none of this Gothic and aristocratic character, though they are almost always charming in the simple grace of their poses, the coquetry of their gestures, and the rhythm of their lines;

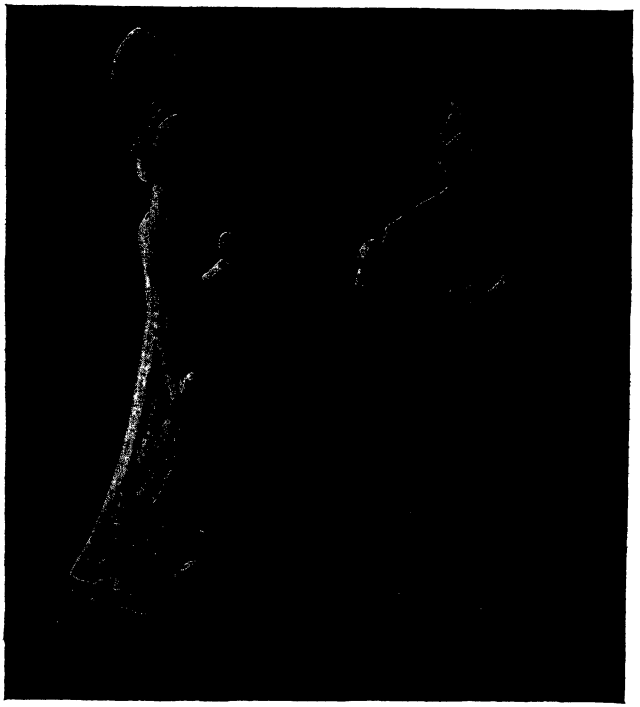


FIGURE 188
Funeral figurines. T'ang.
— *Musée Cernuschi. Photo, Gauthier*

besides which their undulating suppleness lends them an unbroken movement unlike that of the tall, prim dames of olden days. They are the product of a synthetic realism evidently aiming at animation of gesture rather than at facial detail and constitute one of the most pleasing aspects of T'ang art (Fig. 187–195). There may perhaps be

some grounds for wondering whether some elements in this style may not be traced to the influence of the little painted stucco figures of female deities, of a more or less Alexandrian inspiration, that we mentioned above in connexion with Tumshuq, Kūcha, and Turfān (Fig. 111, 112).

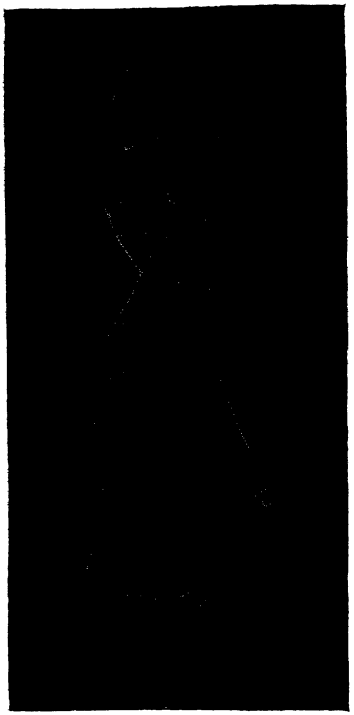


FIGURE 189
T'ang dancing-girl.
— *Koechlin collection*

The besetting danger of T'ang art was that it was content with an absolutely unmitigated realism — with a realism, that is, which realized itself to the utmost; and that in this process the intrinsic violence which had inspired sculpture and decoration since the days of the Six Dynasties was rapidly to evaporate. Thus we arrive at an art compact of force, yet in which this force was none the less to become dissipated, an art consisting entirely in realism, yet in which the form was to become heavy through the very parade of it. This is strikingly apparent in the stone statues on a large scale. The standing or crouching lions of the tomb of Kao-tsung's son at Kung-ling,[1] the winged dragon-horse photographed by Segalen on the tomb of Kao-tsung at Ch'ien-chou (Kien-chou) (Fig. 173), are already heavy, in spite of the elegance of the " equine type " in the latter of these statues. Above all, if we compare the two lions at Kung-ling with the monsters on the Liang tombs, they show us how much the Chinese genius had lost be-

[1] Sirén: *Chinese Sculpture*, III, 429.

tween the beginning of the sixth and the end of the seventh centuries. The violence of the Six Dynasties has become hard and set. In the



FIGURE 190

T'ang female musician.

— Formerly in the Goloubew collection. Photo, Goloubew

latest of these grave-statues — the lions of the Emperor Tē-tsung at Ts'ung-ling, dating from 806 — we can already see signs of the lethargy which was to creep over the art of the Sung period.[1]

[1] Sirén: "*Studien zur chinesischen Plastik der post-T'ang Zeit,*" in the *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, 1927, No. 1.

The same rapid degeneration can be noted in the statues of warriors or of *lokapālas*. From the extreme of realism these were to degenerate into heaviness accompanied by a violence exaggerated to the point of caricature.

DECORATIVE ART IN THE T'ANG PERIOD

THE PRINCIPLES OF T'ANG ORNAMENT, BOTH IN THE BRONZES — especially the mirrors — and in ceramics, were governed by the same laws. After the violently unsymmetrical style of the Six Dynasties, decoration now reverted to the most classical symmetry. The planes, as M. Charles Vignier notes, instead of encroaching upon one another, were once more subject to an ordered arrangement. Yet, while returning to "Han order," decorative art did not fail to profit by the progress made, on the one hand in the vigorous treatment of animal forms under the Six Dynasties, and on the other hand in the animal and floral realism of the T'ang period itself. Hence the mirrors — which, owing to the limitations which they impose upon decorative treatment, form the best criterion for defining the various periods of Chinese art — were now to present a frankly symmetrical arrangement, combined with a constant use of living forms. Henceforward floral and animal motives were preferred to the geometrical ornament of the Han period: we find, for instance, on the one hand, vine-trails and bunches of grapes, or peonies, and, on the other hand, foxes, bears, lions, horses, beasts of the deer tribe, pheasants, and phœnixes. What is more, these vegetable and animal forms, instead of being treated in purely linear outline as a flat design, such as we have seen in the Han period, were raised in rounded relief, simulating full relief when seen from above, and this quality is in keeping with all we know of the T'ang canon of art, which is based, not, like that of Han art, on the plane surface, but on masses.

Certain of these T'ang mirrors, of the pattern known in Europe as

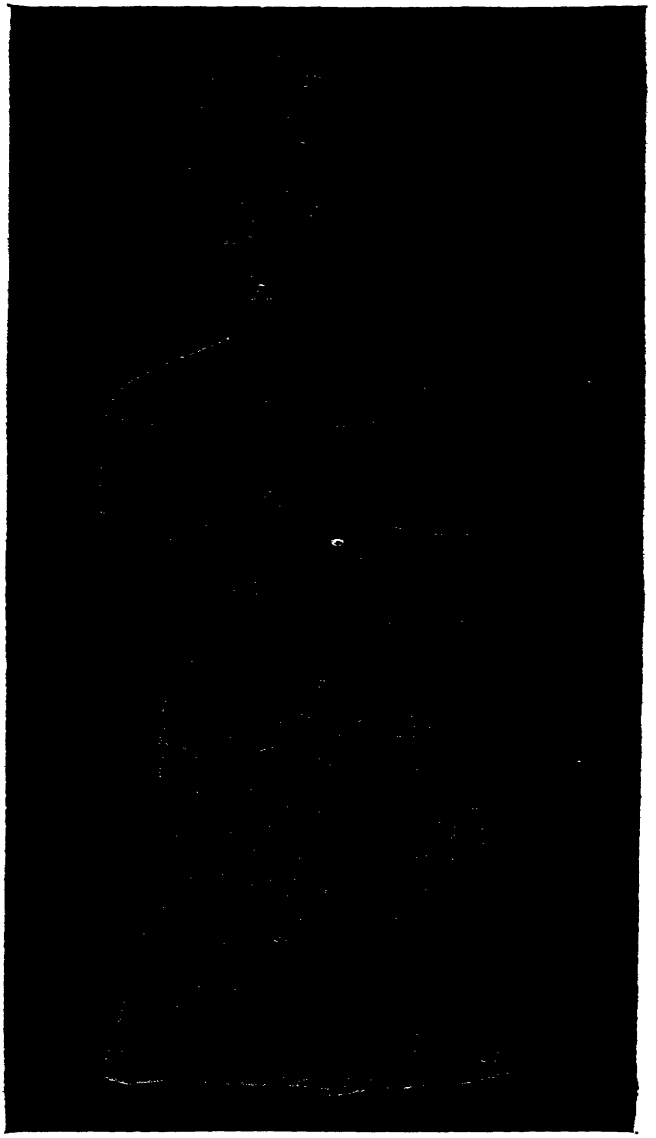


FIGURE 191
T'ang lady.
— *Musée Cernuschi. Photo, Pivot*

the " vine pattern," and in China as the " marine animal and grape pattern," may even be classed as sculpture properly so called. The central boss is in the form of a great recumbent animal seen from above, resembling sometimes a bear, sometimes a wild boar. Round this central animal are other beasts, either bears, lions, foxes, or

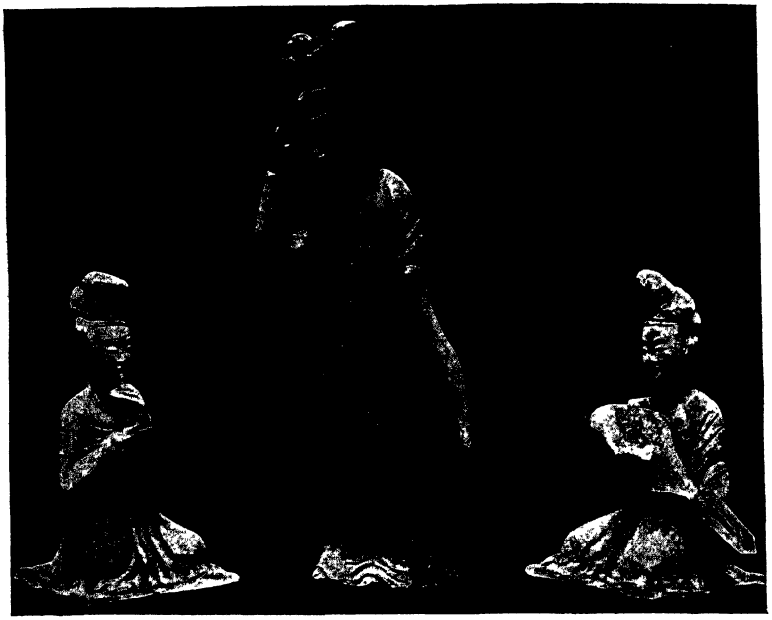


FIGURE 192
T'ang figurines.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

fantastic wild beasts of some intermediate form, but all powerfully modelled and caught in compact attitudes, either creeping, springing, or turning suddenly, which are full of naturalistic vigour. These animals are arranged in regular alternation with vine-trails and bunches of grapes, while in the outer band of the mirror the grapes are usually found in alternation with equally realistically treated

birds, sometimes perched on the vine, sometimes seen from above with their wings outspread in flight.[1] Sometimes each bird on this outer band is pursued by a fox (Fig. 198). These mirrors decorated with animals sometimes err on the side of the heaviness generally found in the realistically treated animals of the T'ang school.[2] But when they are not too much overloaded, they are capable of rising

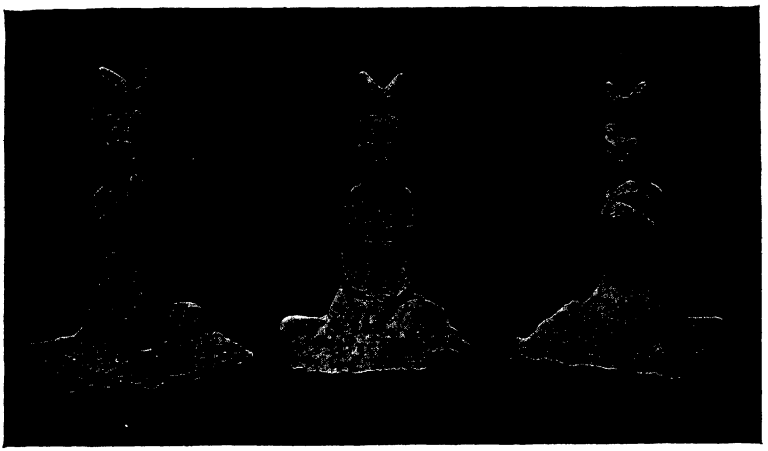


FIGURE 193
T'ang figurines.
— *Musée Cernuschi*

to great beauty.[3] This is particularly so of the mirror in the Sumitomo collection (Fig. 200) on which are represented four animals: a lion, a sort of phœnix, an antelope, and a sort of stork, each ridden by a fantastic being, and all of them racing at furious speed — either at full gallop or at a flying gallop — round the bear in the centre; the powerful realism of the lion,[4] the elegance of the birds and the ante-

[1] Specimens of these are reproduced by O. Kümmel in his *Catalogue* of the Berlin *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst* of 1929, Nos. 454, 455, 456, from the H. Hardt and O. Wassermann collections, Berlin, and the Gothenburg Museum.

[2] A. J. Koop: *Chinese Bronzes*, Pl. 79 and 80.

[3] Cf. A. J. Koop, op. cit., Pl. 81.

[4] Cf. the similar lions on a mirror formerly the property of Monsieur C. T. Loo, reproduced in the catalogue of his *Bronzes antiques*, Pl. XXXVII.

lope, the sinuous coils of the streamers flying from the riders, all go to make the Sumitomo mirror one of the most perfect masterpieces of T'ang art, possessing all the rapid motion and purity of design of

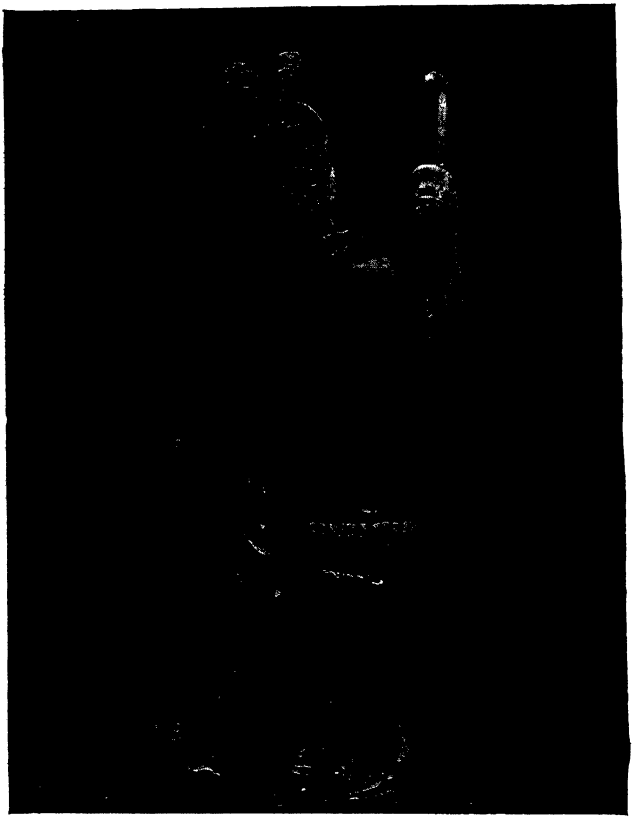


FIGURE 194
Dancing-woman.
— *David-Weill collection*

the Han linear style, added to the triumphant rendering of muscles of the seventh century. The same powerfully realistic treatment of animals, the same elegant rendering of the muscles, the same ob-

servation of beasts in rapid motion, in the leaping and galloping figures of winged horses, lions, wolves, etc., may be seen on a mirror formerly in the Loo collection,[1] as well as on a mirror formerly in the possession of Monsieur Sirén.[2] Such mirrors are more important for an understanding of the animal art of the T'ang artists than the large statues in the round of that time, which are often clumsy and heavy.

As will be seen, the mirror in question is not circular, but edged with eight bow-shaped scallops. The Sumitomo mirror illustrated immediately after it (Fig. 201), with its edge also scalloped out into eight petals, is of even greater simplicity. On either side of the central boss is a prancing winged horse, with its mane and tail tossing in a most decorative disarray; above it are two birds on the wing, flitting through a soberly curving spray with an open convolvulus-flower; below it is an elegant arrangement of vine-trails, with leaves and great lotus-shaped blossoms.[3] Still more elegant in its



FIGURE 195
Wei or T'ang figurine.
— *Vignier collection*

[1] Catalogue of the Loo bronzes, Pl. XXXVI.
[2] Sirén *Catalogue*, *Ars Asiatica*, VII, No. 160.
[3] For supreme elegance and decorative simplicity, see also the fine Vignier mirror reproduced by O. Kümmel in his *Catalogue* of the Berlin *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, 1929, No. 462.

simplicity is the mirror in the Musée Guimet, reproduced as Fig. 202, with a central boss in the form of a rosette like a full-blown flower, surrounded by two sprays of flowers alternating with a decorative motive of some creature in flight. But perhaps, after all, the finest of all the

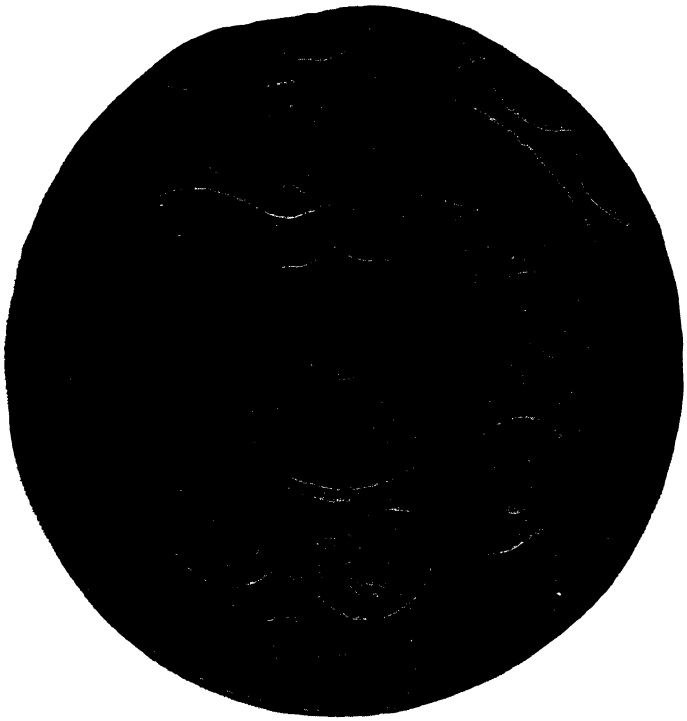


FIGURE 196
T'ang mirror.
— *Musée Guimet*

T'ang mirrors is the one eight and three-quarter inches in diameter in the Eumorfopoulos collection, with its powerful but sober decoration, consisting of two phœnixes passant, with outspread wings, alternating with a light leaf-motive and winged horses at a flying gallop.[1]

[1] Reproduced in colour in Koop, op. cit., Pl. 89.

In such works as this we have travelled far from geometrical decoration and even from the linear treatment of animal forms of the Han period. Henceforward floral and animal subjects, lovingly treated for

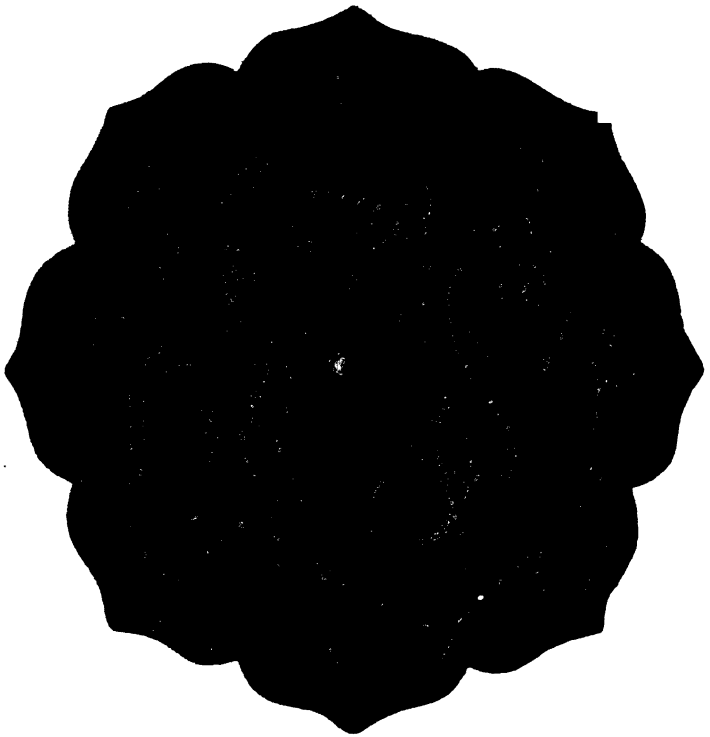


FIGURE 197
T'ang mirror.
— *Henri Rivière collection. Photo, Laniepce*

their own sake, constitute the whole decoration. Perhaps, moreover, it is only just to point out that certain of these subjects, such as the vine-trail, the bunches of grapes, and the winged horse — perhaps reminiscent of Pegasus — may quite well have had their origin in Hellenic influences brought to China by way of central Asia.

On the other hand, nothing but the epic realism of the T'ang period can have produced the two mirrors, one about six and three-quarter inches in diameter in the Eumorfopoulos collection, with an edge scalloped out in eight bow-shaped petals,[1] and the other, five and



FIGURE 198
Mirror with "grape pattern."
— *Sumitomo collection*

four-fifths inches across, with a circular border, in the Louvre. Both of them have as their decoration two galloping horsemen on a plain background, one drawing his bow on a wild boar in flight, the other pursuing a lion or attacking it, lance in rest. This is the finest of

[1] Ibid., Pl. 89, *c*.

the T'ang hunting-scenes and one of the most splendid specimens of animal art produced by that glorious age.[1]

The same laws are illustrated in T'ang ceramics.



FIGURE 198b
Mirror, Six Dynasties.
— *Sumitomo collection*

As we have seen, glazed pottery, generally green in colour, made its appearance at the end of the Han period. No doubt, as Professor Pelliot has suggested,[2] we have here an importation from Iran. How-

[1] O. Kümmel: *Catalogue* of *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin, 1929, No. 457.

[2] Lecture of May 22, 1927. Cf. Barthold Laufer: *The Beginnings of Porcelain in China* (Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, 1917).

ever that may be, this ware reached a high pitch of development during the T'ang period. The glazes now assumed the most varied colours: green, yellow, manganese purple, and blue, the most typical

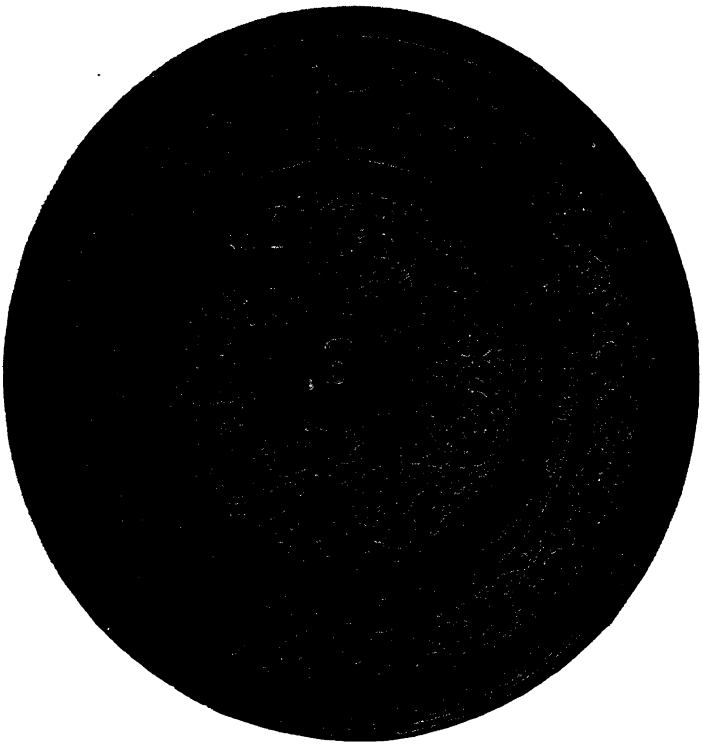


FIGURE 199
T'ang mirror.
— *Sumitomo collection*

colours of this period being always green and an orange yellow tending towards brown. The use of polychrome decoration, which seems to have been previously unknown, now became very frequent. Later, in the period of Sung subtleties of colour, fine connoisseurs went back to the charm of monochrome ware. The T'ang artists, on

the other hand, with their love of frank and even brutal realism, were to delight in somewhat crude contrasts of colour.[1]

The same is true of the forms of the vases, which are as a general

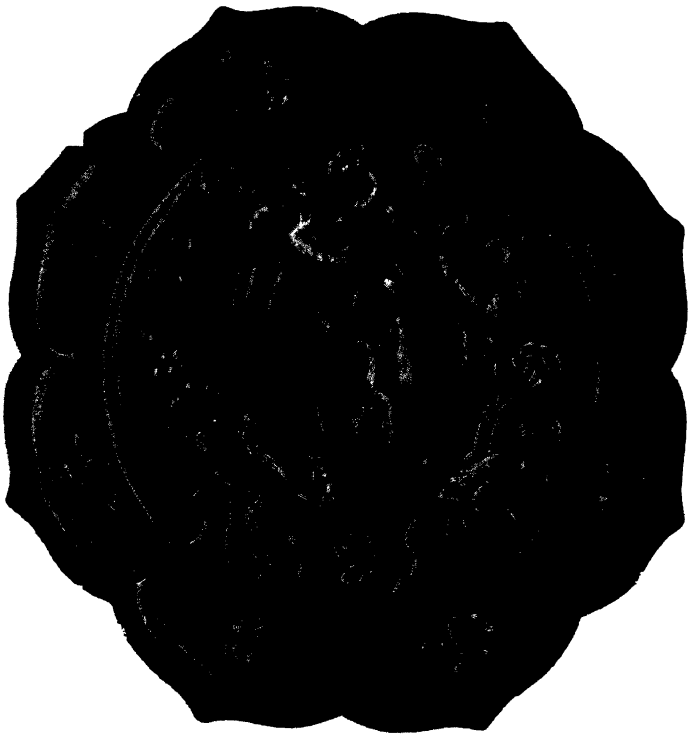


FIGURE 200
T'ang mirror.
— *Sumitomo collection*

rule large amphoras, bottles, and bowls with a certain downrightness and sureness of form, having the planes marked off by sharply defined ridges. As Monsieur Vignier has pointed out, whereas Sung ceramics were to be mainly sensuous in their appeal, T'ang ceramics

[1] *Eumorfopoulos Catalogue*, I, almost always green and orange, sometimes reddish orange and dark blue (LVIII, 402).

were still of an architectural character: the mouth does not spread out like the cup of a flower, and the curve of the body is moulded for its own sake, with none of those reminiscences of women's lips or hips which were so dear to the dilettante spirit of the Sung age. Some-

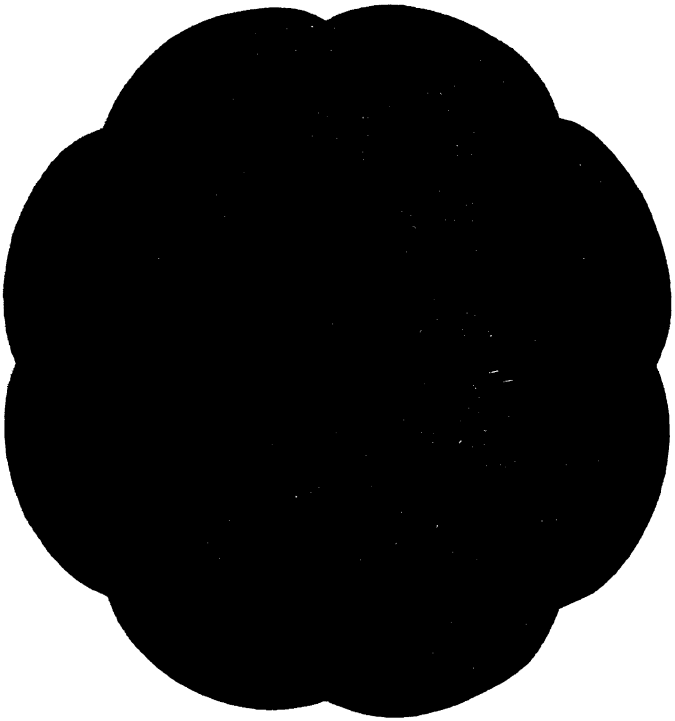


FIGURE 201
Mirror with winged horses.
— *Sumitomo collection*

times, however, the amphoras — for they well deserve this name — have a haughty elegance worthy of Hellenic work; [1] perhaps in them we really have an influence coming, if not from dead Hellas, at least from the Irano-Fāṭimid bronze ewers.[2] The discovery of Chinese

[1] O. Kümmel: *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin, 1929, *Catalogue*, Nos. 384, 385.
[2] Ibid., I, 497, 492.

pottery in the 'Abbāsid capital of Sāmarrā, dating from between 836 and 889, justifies us in supposing that, conversely, Western models could not have been unknown to the court of Si-ngan-fu.[1]

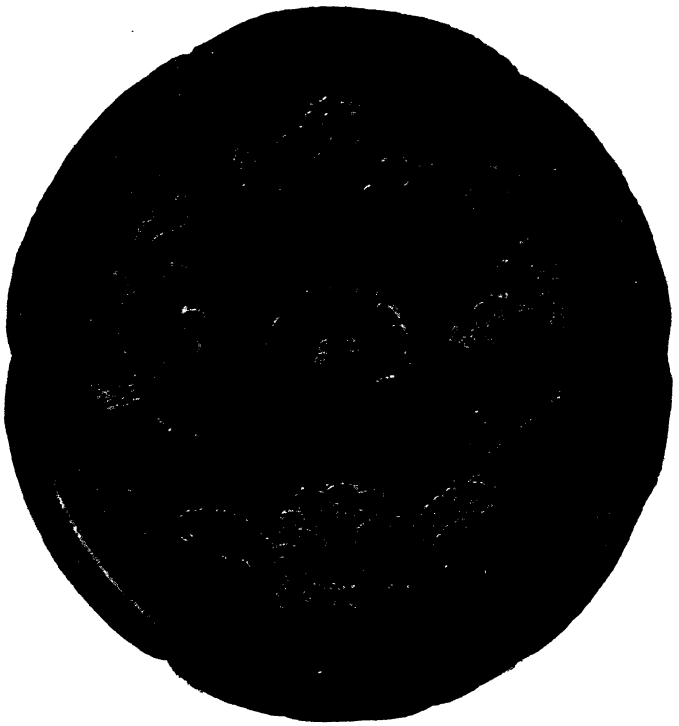


FIGURE 202
T'ang mirror with flower pattern.
— *Musée Guimet, Pelliot donation*

The decoration of this ceramic ware displays the same frank boldness and solidity of construction as T'ang art, combined with all that

[1] Marquet de Vasselot: "*Quelques Exemples des relations artistiques entre l'Orient et l'Extrême-Orient*, in *Mélanges Schlumberger* (1924); R. Koechlin: *A propos de la céramique de Samarra* (Syria, 1926); R. Koechlin: "Chinese Influences in the Musulman Pottery of Susa," *Eastern Art*, I, 1 (July 1928); Oscar Raphael: "Some Notes on the Early Pottery of the Near East," in *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society, 1925–1926* (1928), p. 27.

we have seen of its well-ordered strength. We must make our excuses for giving no reproductions of ceramics here; but they must be reproduced in colour if they are not to be misrepresented, so that we had rather refer our readers to Mr. Hobson's treatises, and in particular to the first volume of his catalogue of the Eumorfopoulos collection, in which we find, for instance, a strong, simple motive of conventionalized foliage, in white on a green ground,[1] running round the body of a vase in a broad, calm rhythmic line; more frequently the pleasure which it gives the eye is caused by the mottled ground of green, orange brown, and yellow, which are the main tones of the T'ang potter's palette; [2] or, if the ground is of a single colour, green or orange, the decoration is confined to the repetition of a floral motive, supported by a great zigzag bar. When the ornament develops into a rosette or an octagonal rosette pattern, the design is still powerful, simple, and broad.[3] If a band of flowers and foliage appears on the body of the vase, it is dominated by the same classicism devoid of over-elaboration.[4] The typical example of this style of decoration is to be found in the well-known gourd-shaped vase in the Koechlin collection, which has a reddish body with an olive-green glaze, and a large palmette-motive in relief running down from the neck almost to the base of the body.[5] The regularity and strength of this motive may be taken as typical of the whole T'ang canon of art.

[1] *Eumorfopoulos Collection*, ed. Hobson, I, Pl. XLIX, No. 407.
[2] Ibid., Pl. L, 330, 389; LX, 403.
[3] Ibid., I, 402, 403. Also O. Kümmel: *Catalogue* of *Ausstellung chinesischer Kunst*, Berlin, 1929, Nos. 391, 392, from the Calmann collection.
[4] *Eumorfopoulos Catalogue*, ed. Hobson, I, 406.
[5] Hobson: *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, I, Pl. 13, I; and Henri Rivière: *Céramique d'Extrême-Orient*, Pl. 9.

PAINTING UNDER THE T'ANG EMPERORS AND THE FIVE DYNASTIES

WE HAVE SPOKEN ABOVE OF THE ORIGINS OF CHINESE PAINTING, NOT only as we can form an idea of it from those renderings in carved outline found on the Han funeral reliefs of Ho-nan and Shan-tung, but also as we may become directly acquainted with it from painted slabs such as the Denman Ross bricks in the Boston Museum or painted vases such as the pair in the British Museum. It is not, however, till we reach the T'ang period that we find sets of really pictorial works. Not that as many T'ang paintings have come down to us as was once supposed. Most of the works given out to be such in the time of Fenollosa, the viceroy Tuan Fang, and the late lamented Petrucci are now universally considered to be Sung, Yuan, or even Ming copies; but, to make up for this, the Pelliot and Aurel Stein missions to Tun-huang have brought to light whole sets of undeniably authentic paintings and frescoes belonging to the T'ang period, that of the Five Dynasties (907–959), which immediately succeeded it, and the earliest years of the Sung period.

Among the treasures thus recovered we should distinguish two classes: on the one hand, works of purely Buddhist inspiration, which, like the sculptures found in association with them, reveal influences which are sometimes Greco-Roman, sometimes Indo-Gupta, and sometimes Iranian; and, on the other hand, specifically Chinese fragments — portraits of donors or secondary figures and episodes — in which the national tradition whose early stages we have seen in the fragments of Han painting finds a continuation.

By virtue of its position on the extreme frontier of Kan-su, where that province runs up in a point into the heart of the Gobi desert, Tun-huang is at once the last oasis in central Asia on the way to China,

and the last outpost of China in the direction of central Asia, India, and Iran. Hence the paintings found by Professor Pelliot and Sir



FIGURE 203
Samantabhadra from Tun-huang.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*



FIGURE 205
Bodhisattva from Tun-huang.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*



FIGURE 207
Kshitigarbha from Tun-huang.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

Aurel Stein in the caves of the Thousand Buddhas, near the town, and brought back by them to the Musée Guimet and the British Museum, possess a singular interest in the history of civilization. Embracing,

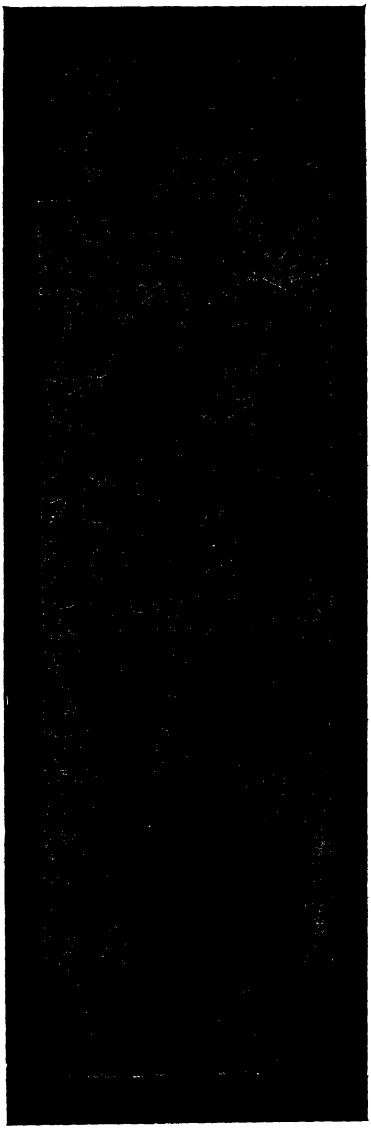


FIGURE 204

Avalokitēśvara from Tun-huang.
— *Louvre. Pelliot mission*

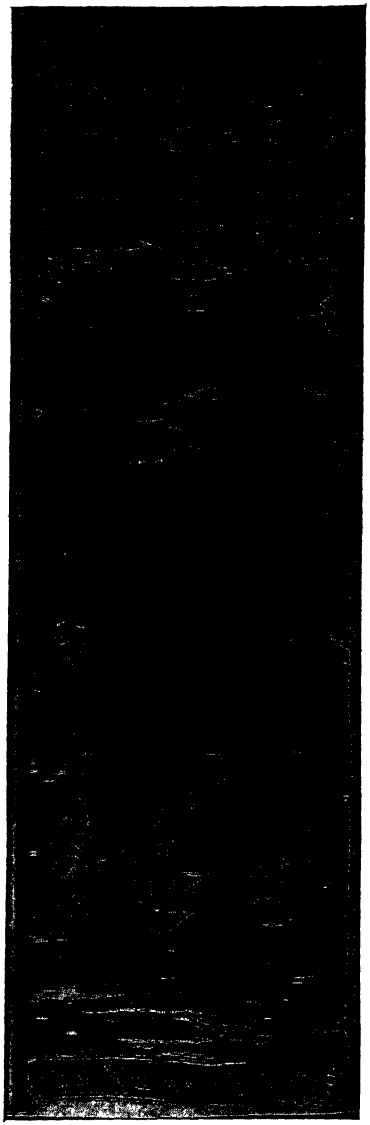


FIGURE 206

Kshitigarbha from Tun-huang.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

as they do, the period from the beginning of the seventh century to the end of the tenth — for the oldest of them dates from 607,[1] and the most recent from about 983 [2] — they reveal to us the process by which Gandhārian, Gupta, and Pāla models, as well as Iranian ones, were progressively introduced into China and adapted to Chinese purposes.

This assimilation to the Chinese style might already have been foretold from the finds at Turfān. On the frescoes from Turfān brought back to Berlin by Professors Von Le Coq and Grünwedel most of the Gupta and Gandhārian motives were undergoing a general transformation tending towards that massive solidity of form and thickening of the facial lineaments which we have already been so surprised to find foreshadowed in certain stucco figures from Haḍḍa in Afghanistan (Fig. 106, 107, 113).[3] Similarly, the faces of the divinities flying and carrying flowers display the same central Asiatic treatment at Turfān as at Bāmiyān (Fig. 105, 115).

At Tun-huang the elements imported from abroad are sometimes to be found still in their original state, sometimes in process of assimilation to the Chinese style, and sometimes already assimilated. We have already mentioned the well-known banner in the British Museum, dating from the eighth century, or even earlier, on which a Śākyamuni, so Greco-Roman as to be almost Byzantine in character, is surrounded by two bodhisattvas with the torso nude and of an elegance which would proclaim its unmixed descent from the school of Ajaṇṭā or the Pāla schools if it were not for a somewhat languid grace and the slightest tendency towards plumpness, which here, as in the Japanese frescoes at the Hōryūji, proclaim the influence of the

[1] Painting acquired by the Boston Museum. See *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Vol. XXVI, No. 153 (February 1928), pp. 11–13.

[2] Chronologically, then, the latest paintings from Tun-huang belong to the Sung period. None the less, in this far-distant provincial — or almost colonial — outpost on the fringe of the empire, they still follow the T'ang style on the whole.

[3] See the *praṇidhi* scene from Temple IX at Bäzäkliq in *Chotscho*, Pl. 17–21; also the couples reproduced in *Chotscho*, Pl. 15; and compare these with the couples at Ajaṇṭā.

Far East; [1] while the two *dēvatas* or *apsaras* on the upper part of the banner, descending from the sky amid flying scarfs, streamers, and

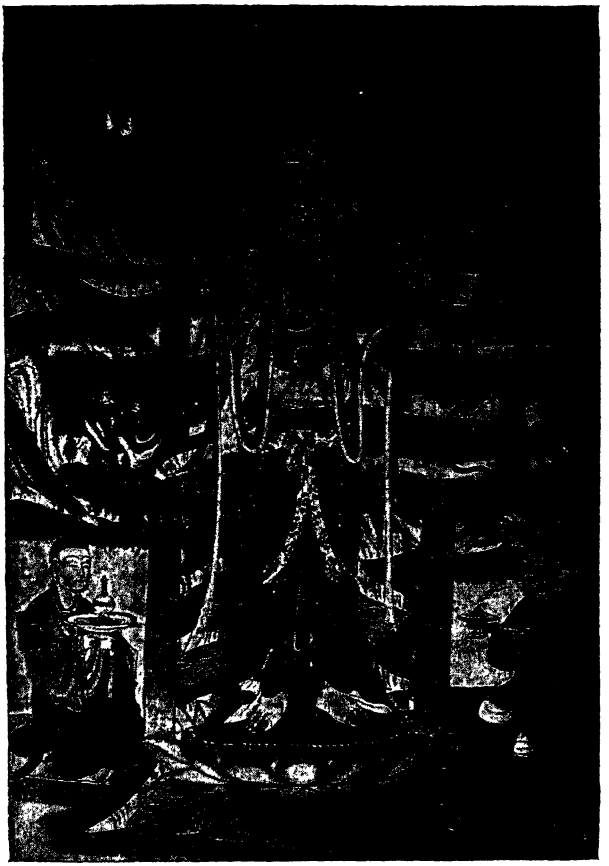


FIGURE 208
The miracles of Kuan-yin. Paintings from Tun-huang.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

clouds, serve as a link between the figures of an analogous type at Ajaṇṭā, on the one hand, and those of the Korean tomb of Sammyori,

[1] *Ars Asiatica*, VI, Pl. 15.

dating from the middle of the sixth century,[1] the coffin-plate from Koryo in the Government Museum at Seoul,[2] and, lastly, the flying "angels" of Hōryūji, on the other. The small paintings from Tun-huang belonging to the Pelliot collection in the Musée Guimet, and representing isolated figures of bodhisattvas, enable us to follow this process of evolution still more clearly. Fig. 203 shows a Samanta-bhadra in which Pāla influences are still by no means remote: the nude torso, the slender body, the full development of the hips, the transparence of the floating scarfs, and the treatment of the hands are in the style of Ajaṇṭā; but the legs are short, with none of the slender grace of the Pāla school. Close at hand, among the bodhisattvas exhibited on the same wall, the Indian type has become so far assimilated to the Chinese in style as to offer something of the grave, proud, but rather languid grace of Hōryūji[3] (Fig. 205) — unless, indeed, it goes beyond this stage and already betrays the Sung tendency towards thickening (Fig. 206 and 208). Chinese influence prevails — this time in a more pleasing form — in a portrait of Kshitigarbha, the kindly judge of the lower world, represented as a monk holding the Jewel (Fig. 207; cf. Fig. 210). The right shoulder, left uncovered in Indian works of art, is here hidden beneath the cloak. The streamers have disappeared and a purely classical, regular drapery, devoid of any Indian reminiscence, serves to blend the Roman style of the later empire with the Chinese. The face, too, which is beardless and of a pure oval, though again with rather thickened lineaments, definitively departs from the Indian type and shows a fusion of the Greco-Roman with the Chinese type. On the other hand, in the paintings of *lokapālas* we observe a fusion of Sāsānid and Chinese style, such as we saw above at Bäzäkliq and Turfān, but at the same time

[1] A. Eckardt: *History of Korean Art*, Fig. 217.

[2] Ibid., Fig. 481.

[3] See also the two figures of Avalokitēśvara, Stein collection, British Museum, reproduced by Binyon: *Peintures chinoises dans les collections d'Angleterre*, *Ars Asiatica*, IX, Pl. IV.

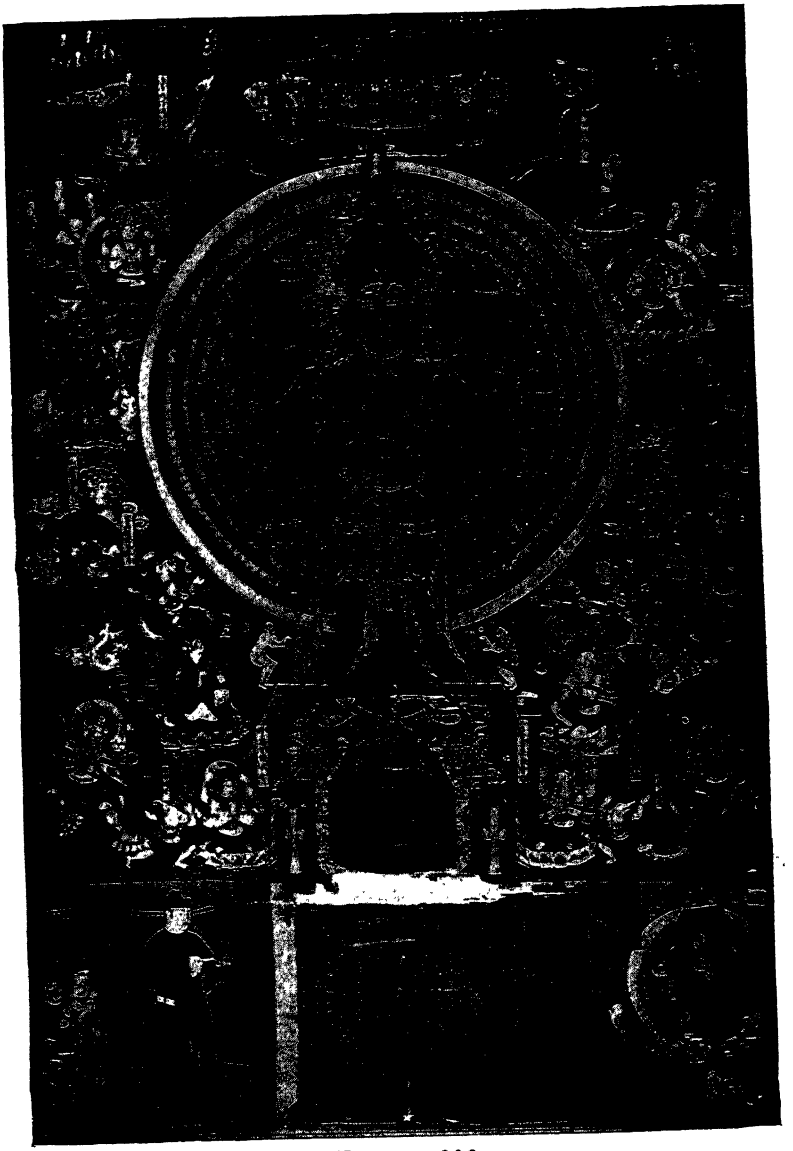


FIGURE 209

Avalokitēśvara. Sung painting from Tun-huang.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

with an obvious increase in the Chinese elements, as we can convince ourselves from the magnificent Vaiśravaṇa in full armour, crossing

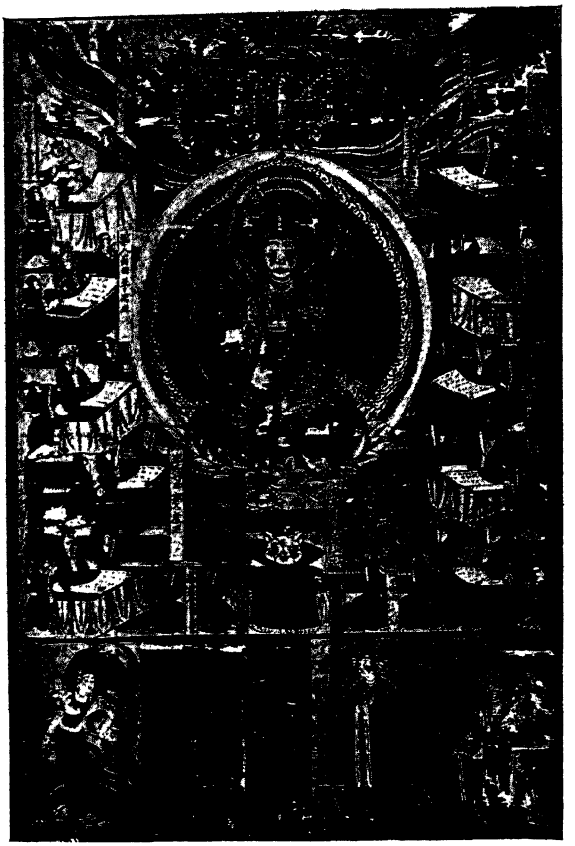


FIGURE 210
Kshitigarbha as judge of the infernal regions.
Early Sung painting from Tun-huang.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

the ocean with his suite, which forms the subject of a small painting in the Stein collection,[1] and in the equally fine painting of a similar nature belonging to the Pelliot collection, in the Musée Guimet.

[1] *Ars Asiatica*, IX, Pl. V.

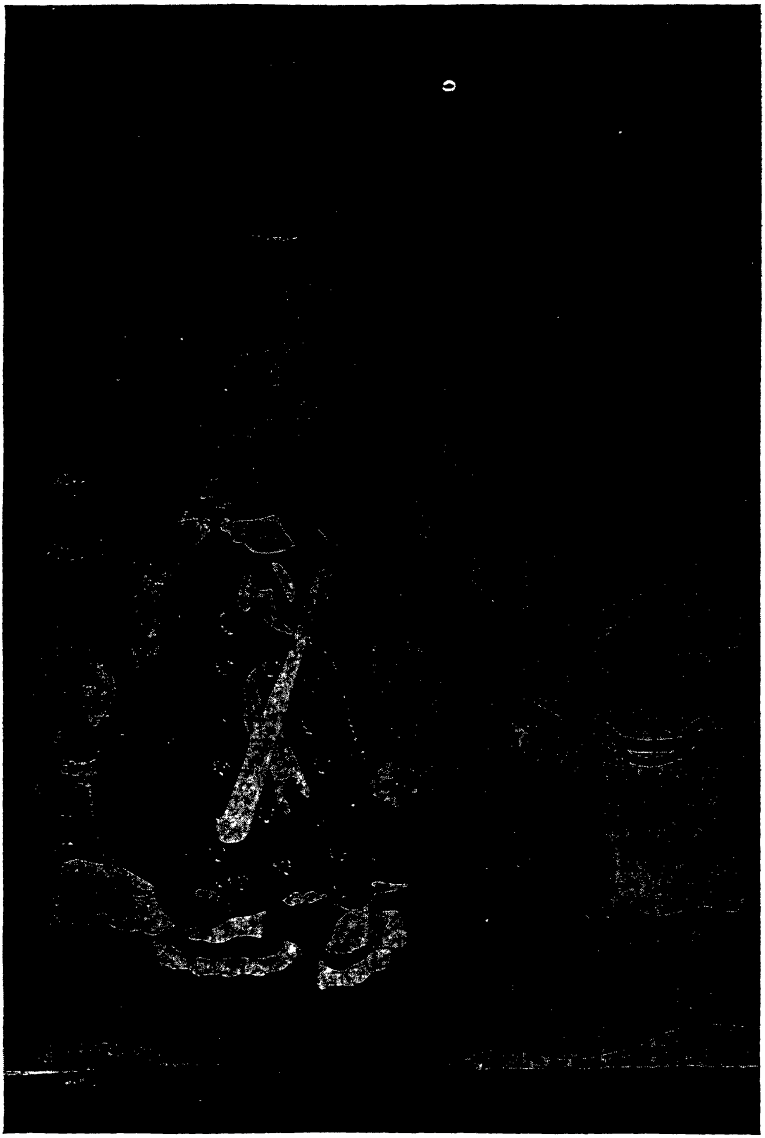


FIGURE 211

Bodhisattva and donor. Painting from Tun-huang.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

At Tun-huang these various types of bodhisattva or mythical being are grouped in great formal, stately compositions with a fine decorative effect. Among the large number of works of this sort I need



FIGURE 212
Donors, from Tun-huang.
— *Pelliot mission*

only mention two, representing the "paradise of Avalokitēśvara," one in the Stein collection, in the British Museum, the other in the Pelliot collection, at the Musée Guimet, both of which are perfect

marvels. The one in the Pelliot collection is reproduced in colour as the frontispiece to my *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient;*[1] that in the

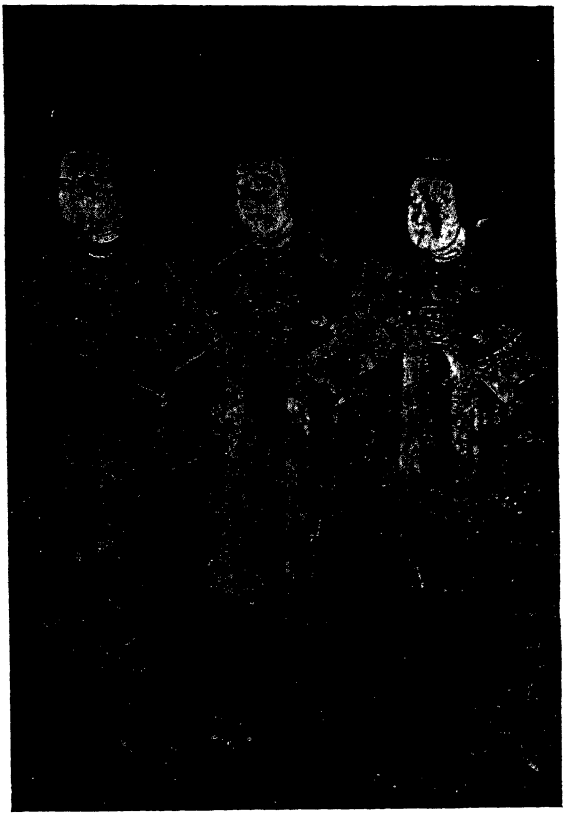


FIGURE 213
Female donors from Tun-huang.
— *Pelliot mission*

Stein collection is reproduced, also in colour, in Volume IV of *Serindia;*[2] and I refer the reader to these two works, for the part played by colour in these vast compositions is of supreme importance.

[1] Published by Geuthner, Paris, 1929. [2] Stein: *Serindia*, Vol. IV, Pl. LXIV.

In this respect the Stein banner is a vision of fairy-like beauty. The bodhisattva, represented with forty arms, like some Hindu god, is seated on his throne amid a subdued but vibrant harmony of faded gold, rose, and red, while his countenance is a blend of Buddhist suavity with the cosmic majesty of the visions of Elephanta. Above him are some delightful little nude figures of bodhisattvas, at once Indian and Chinese in treatment; on the left is an elegant Chinese figure, on the right an ascetic of the type which we shall find in Tibetan miniatures. Still more brilliant is the Pelliot banner, with its golden-yellow Avalokitēśvara, whose "thousand" arms stand out in celestial splendour against a great circle of orange; with its multitude of saints and divinities surrounding the Being of Wisdom — soft, voluptuous, and tender Indian nudes seated in the lotus beneath the green or blue nimbus which crowns them, or bodhisattvas of the Far East and charming young Chinese monks in splendid festal robes, set off by their mauve or violet aureoles dotted with rosette patterns, or *lokapālas* in armour of the T'ang period, with a haunting reminiscence of some former existence which they might have spent as Sāsānid mounted horsemen in central Asia; or Vajrapāṇi fighting with demons in the lower part of the scene, in a tall flame of brilliant red, the values of which are balanced by the deep blue-grey of the upper sky; and finally, at the foot of the roll, face to face with a suavely elegant Kshitigarbha of a preponderantly Chinese type, a full-length portrait of the worthy Chinese mandarin who offered this painting to the Buddha for his soul's salvation in the year 981 of our era (Fig. 209).

There is nothing surprising in this powerful colouring: it is quite in harmony with what we have seen of the frank realism, vehement downrightness, and uncompromising vigour of the T'ang period. The impressionist, æsthetic, literary qualities of the Sung period were to call for chiaroscuro and monochrome painting; but both here and in the ceramics of the period T'ang realism tended to call for strongly

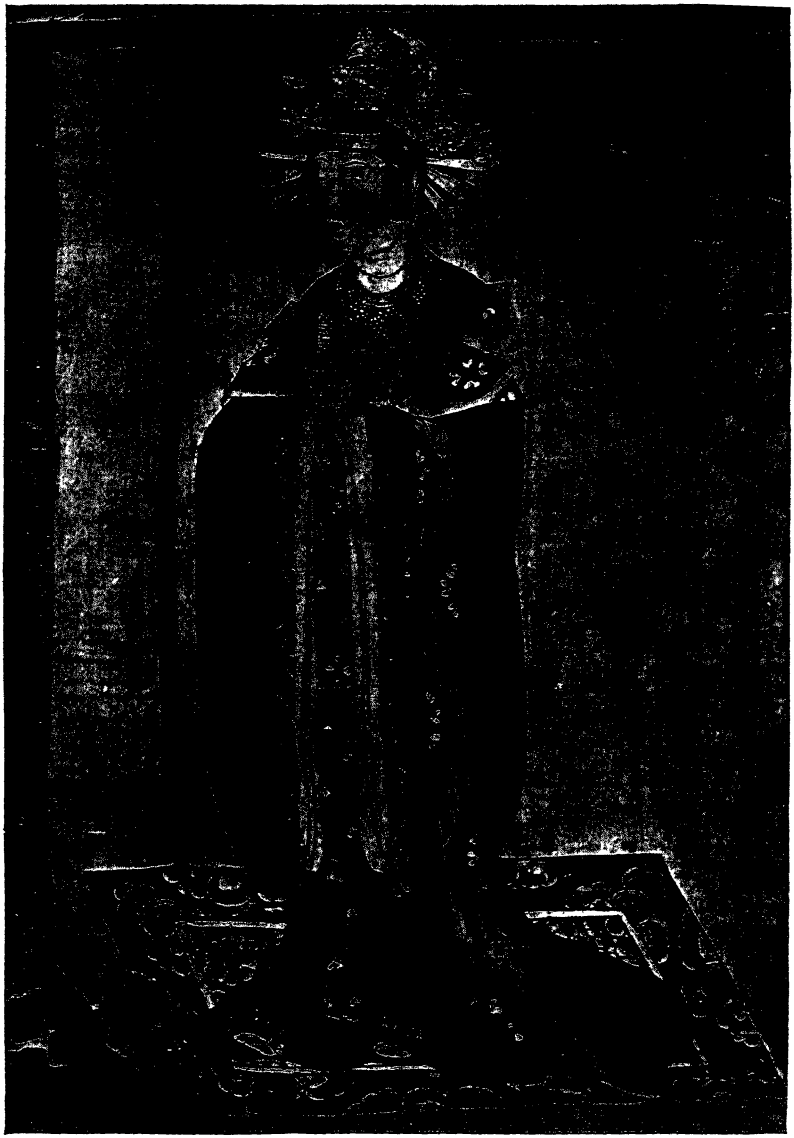


FIGURE 214

Female donor, detail of Fig. 210.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

marked and, if anything, violent contrasts of colour, recalling the range of tones of an illumination.

In these portraits of donors, which, as we have seen, became the rule even in scenes laid in paradise, we go beyond imported Buddhist influences and once again join hands with native Chinese tradition.

All the historical documents assert that national schools of painting existed under the Six Dynasties and the T'ang dynasty quite independently of foreign influence, whether Indian or other. For the Six Dynasties they mention the name of Ku K'ai-chih, who flourished from about 344 to 406, and to whom the fine roll in the British Museum of which we shall speak below has been attributed. For the T'ang period later Chinese art-critics mention as many as two schools of painting: in the first place the so-called "northern school," which seems to have aimed more particularly at realism and to have included among its leading painters Li Ssŭ-hsün, who flourished between about 651 and 720, his son Li Chao-tao, and Han Kan, who flourished round about 700; not to mention the Buddhist painter Wu Tao-tzŭ, who painted between 720 and 750 (cf. Fig. 224, 225, 226);[1] and in the second place a so-called "southern school," to which is attributed the invention of impressionist landscapes in monochrome such as were to become so numerous during the Sung period, and the chief painter of which is alleged to have been the poet Wang Wei, or Wang Mo-ch'i (Wang Mo-k'i), who lived from about 699 to 750 (cf. Fig. 227).

It has been established by Professor Pelliot that this distinction between the painting of the north and that of the south is a later invention and corresponds with the different centres of the Buddhist school known as the Dhyana, or *T'ien-t'ai*. It is certain, in particular,

[1] For the definitions of the "style of Wu Tao-tzŭ," elaborated at a later date, see Professor Pelliot's discussion of this point in his article "*Les Fresques de Touen-houang et les fresques de M. Eumorfopoulos*," in *Revue des arts asiatiques*, Vth year, No. IV, especially pp. 199–200.

that the treatment of landscape for its own sake does not go back as far as the T'ang period, but only as far as the Sung, as we shall see below.[1]

In the absence of works by Wu Tao-tzŭ, Li Chao-tao, and Wang Wei, we possess a certain number of paintings of the Chinese school, dating from the Six Dynasties, the T'ang period, and the Five Dynasties, in the shape of the paintings from Turfān and Tun-huang, which may correctly be called Chinese, a few ancient rolls such as that in the British Museum attributed to Ku K'ai-chih, and a few recently discovered Korean paintings.

The Turfān group has yielded certain specimens in the pure Chinese tradition of the T'ang period, of which we will mention only a fragment of a roll dating from the eighth century, discovered by Sir Aurel Stein at Astana, near Turfān, and representing a lady with a page under a tree — no doubt an isolated episode from some "spring festival" series.[2] The whole daintiness of Chinese art is already present in these refined and rather round-cheeked faces. The colouring is wonderfully fresh, with its shades of pink and vivid red, while the attitudes recall the Japanese portraits of Shōtoku Taishi.

Though belonging to a provincial school, the paintings brought back from Tun-huang to the Musée Guimet or the British Museum enable us to distinguish the T'ang, early Five Dynasties, or early Sung styles in portraiture, caricature, animal art, and landscape.

There are a number of portraits of donors whose dignified poses have a vigour and authority which point to the existence of a long-standing academic tradition behind them. One of these, belonging to the Pelliot collection in the Musée Guimet — a bearded figure with clasped hands, following the bodhisattva who is guiding him along a pathway of the clouds (Fig. 211) — displays a breadth of design, a

[1] See Professor Pelliot's lecture of June 16, 1927.

[2] Binyon: *Peintures chinoises dans les collections d'Angleterre*, *Ars Asiatica*, IX, Pl. II; coloured reproduction in Stein: *Innermost Asia*, Vol. III, Pl. CV.

power and also a sincerity of expression which to some extent recall the well-known painting formerly in the Worch collection attributed

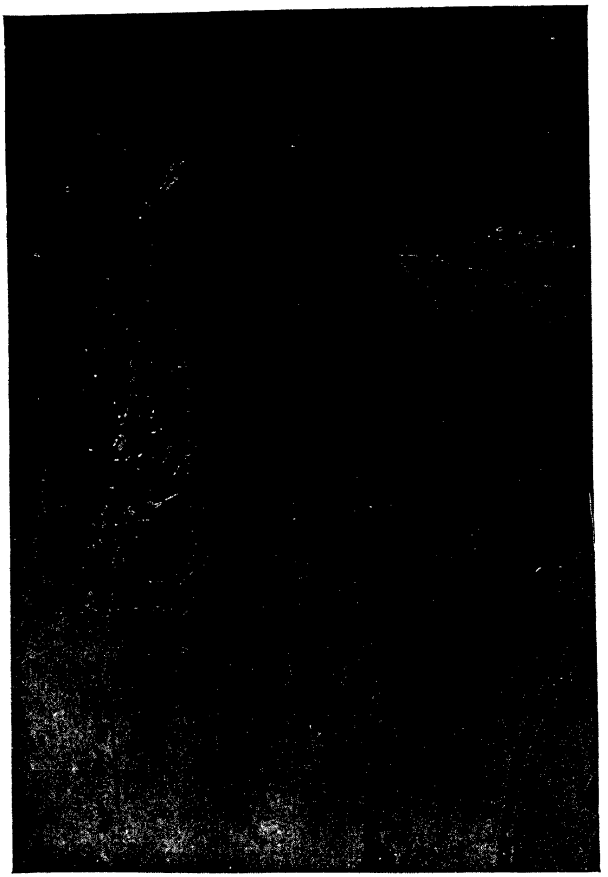


FIGURE 215
Fresco from Tun-huang.
— *Pelliot mission*

to T'eng Ch'ang-yu (about 880), and representing the Taoist saint Lu Tung-pin.[1] There are other full-length portraits of donors in black

[1] René Grousset: *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient* (Paris, Geuthner), I, Pl. XXI, p. 342.

robes which have the sure touch of Ming funeral portraits (Fig. 208, 209). There are also a few figures of monks or Buddhist saints which are real portraits: for instance, the Kāśyapa, dated 729, in the Musée Guimet, a striking figure with wrinkles and flaccid cheeks, in which we see T'ang realism applied to the rendering of a type of old age.[1]



FIGURE 216
Horsemen. Painting from Tun-huang.
— *Louvre. Pelliot mission*

Tun-huang has also yielded portraits of female donors — sometimes whole bevies of them — whether great ladies or ordinary middle-class women, with round faces and a reserved, dignified, or precious expression, as the case may be, advancing in a state costume of brocade with a rosette pattern, and wearing very elaborate high-piled head-dresses adorned with flowers (Fig. 212–214). Side by side with these official scenes, Tun-huang has also produced a few

[1] Hackin: *Guide-Catalogue du Musée Guimet, Les Collections bouddhiques*, p. 47.

female figures of a more delicate charm, such as the graceful kneeling figure from Cave 58, with its flowing line, which Professor Pelliot has used as the frontispiece to his book on the caves of Tun-huang and has kindly allowed us to reproduce here (Fig. 215).

The animal art of T'ang days is found again both in Kashgaria and at Tun-huang. The Chinese historians speak of a painter Han Kan

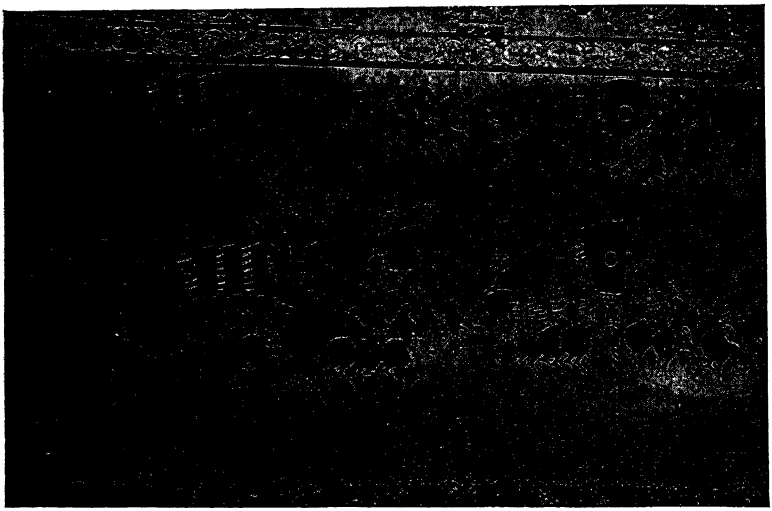


FIGURE 217
Fresco from Tun-huang.
— *Pelliot mission. By kind permission of Messrs. Geuthner*

who, they say, specialized in studies of horses at the beginning of the eighth century. None of his work has survived, but at Tun-huang we have some very fine paintings of horses which are in no way unworthy of the mounted horsemen among the funeral terracottas. We may mention, for example, the fragment brought back to the British Museum by Sir Aurel Stein from Mazartagh, with the three galloping horses in brown and reddish tones, a rapidly sketched but broad and vigorous piece of painting.[1] At Tun-huang itself are to be found some

[1] Binyon, *Ars Asiatica*, IX, Pl. III.

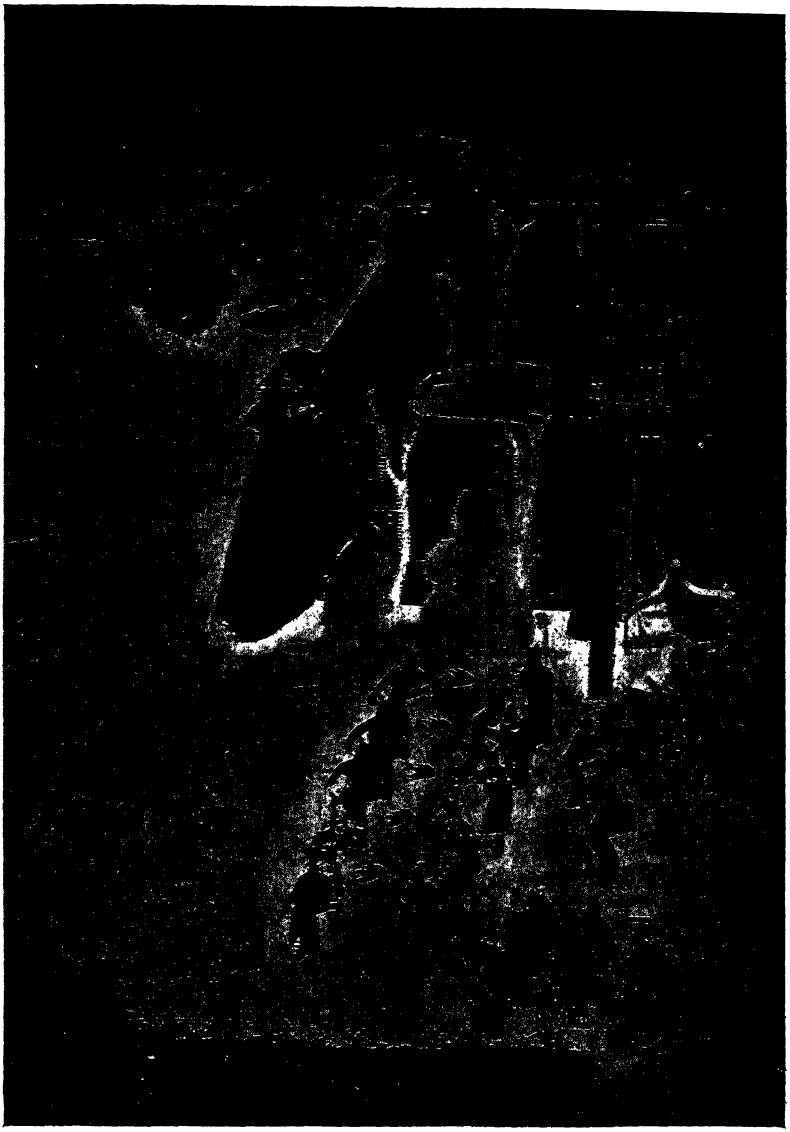


FIGURE 218

Fresco from Tun-huang.

— Pelliot mission. By kind permission of Messrs. Geuthner

good studies of horses, which go to confirm the traditions connected with the name of Han Kan, for the very reason that they belong to a merely provincial school. In his volume on Asiatic art at the British Museum,[1] Mr. Binyon has reproduced two banners after Sir Aurel Stein, one of which represents the bodhisattva on horseback meeting the sick man, and the other a mare with her foal preparing to suck its mother's milk, near a cow which is licking her calf; the former of these fragments, the equestrian group, bears witness to both mastery and elegance in the rendering of the forms of the horse, the latter to a breadth and freedom of touch which are equally admirable. We here reproduce a fragment of a painting on paper, from the Pelliot collection, representing two horsemen, a dignitary and his banner-bearer,[2] in which we may admire the same breadth and power in the drawing — a proof of the ease with which the T'ang animal-painters caught the characteristic outline of the horse (Fig. 216). The Pelliot mission also brought back some groups of horse or foot-soldiers showing how the artists treated military scenes on a large scale. We reproduce here part of the procession from Cave 17 b, with rows of prancing cavalry and flying standards. The splendid movement which sweeps through the whole body of horsemen makes this one of the most striking embodiments of the epic feats of the T'ang period that have come down to us (Fig. 217). Another illustration of these same feats, with the addition of a Buddhist tinge, is to be found in the painting in Cave 70 representing two rows of foot-soldiers, the first with lowered pikes, and the second advancing against them beneath the walls of a fortress, with their shields in an attitude of defence (Fig. 218); while Fig. 219, again, shows us landscape piled upon landscape in panoramic fashion, with mountains, roads along which travel both riders and pedestrians, groves, palaces, and pagodas. From these scenes we may obtain an idea of the character of T'ang

[1] Id., *L'Art asiatique au British Museum*, *Ars Asiatica*, VI, Pl. XVII.
[2] Cf. Pelliot, loc. cit., in *Revue des arts asiatiques*, Year V, No. IV, pp. 203–4.

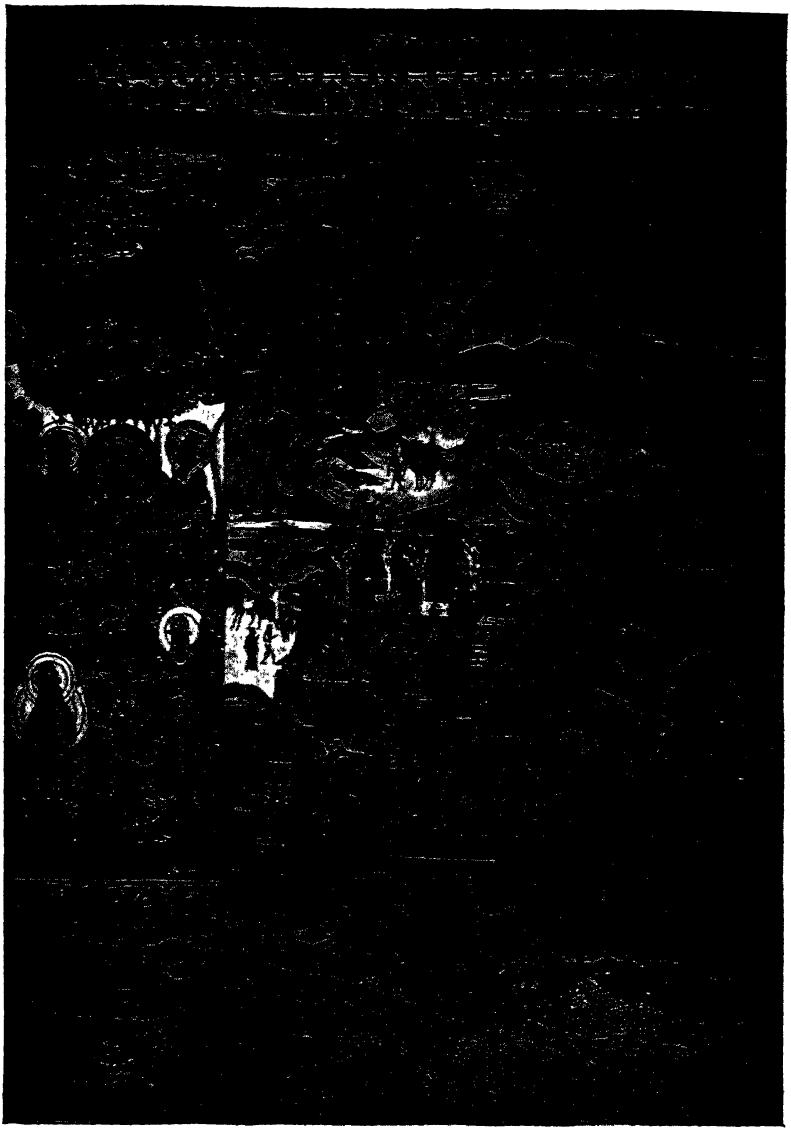


FIGURE 219

Fresco from Tun-huang.

— Pelliot mission. By kind permission of Messrs. Geuthner

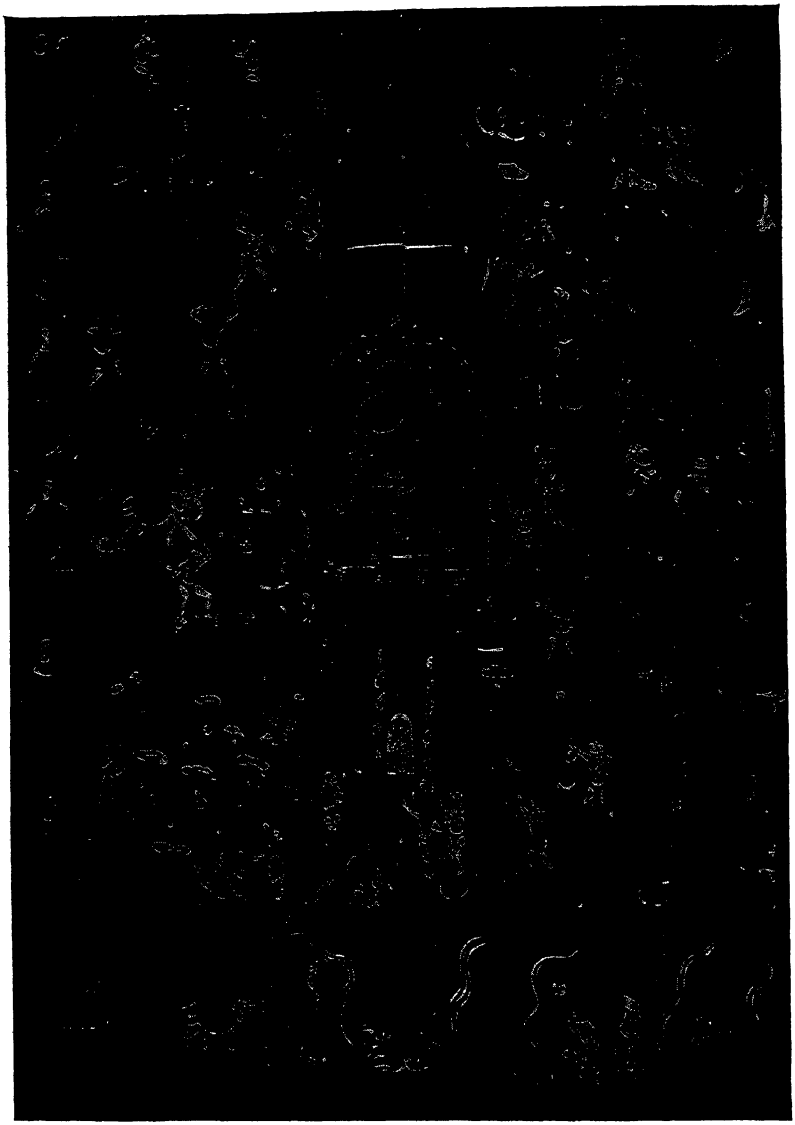


FIGURE 220

The assault of Mārā. Painting from Tun-huang.
— *Musée Guimet. Pelliot mission*

landscapes, which are always treated, not for their own sake, but as the setting for historic or religious scenes, but are none the less solidly constructed.

In Fig. 220 we find the same love of episodes which fill the picture with a host of figures, while all these details are marshalled in accordance with the rules of a strictly ordered arrangement. We have here a Buddhist painting, properly so called, brought back to the



FIGURE 221
Fragment of the roll of Ku K'ai-chih.
— *By courtesy of the British Museum*

Musée Guimet by Professor Pelliot, and representing the famous episode of the assault of Mārā: the Buddha, seated beneath the Tree of Enlightenment and making the gesture of "calling the earth to witness," is being assailed by the whole host of demons. This famous painting reveals not only an obvious skill in the marshalling of crowds, but also an amazing inventiveness in the sphere of caricature — for which reason, mainly, we reproduce it here. It shows a power of imagination in this line which, though closely following the Sanskrit text of the *Lalita Vistara*, remains none the less worthy of note from the Chinese point of view. This quality of humour

in treating the grim and horrible was already potentially present in the figures of *t'ao-t'ieh* evolved in the " late Chóu " or " post-Chóu " style, as well as in the " Han gnomes." The necessity for picturing the Buddhist hell now enabled it to assume its definitive form. We

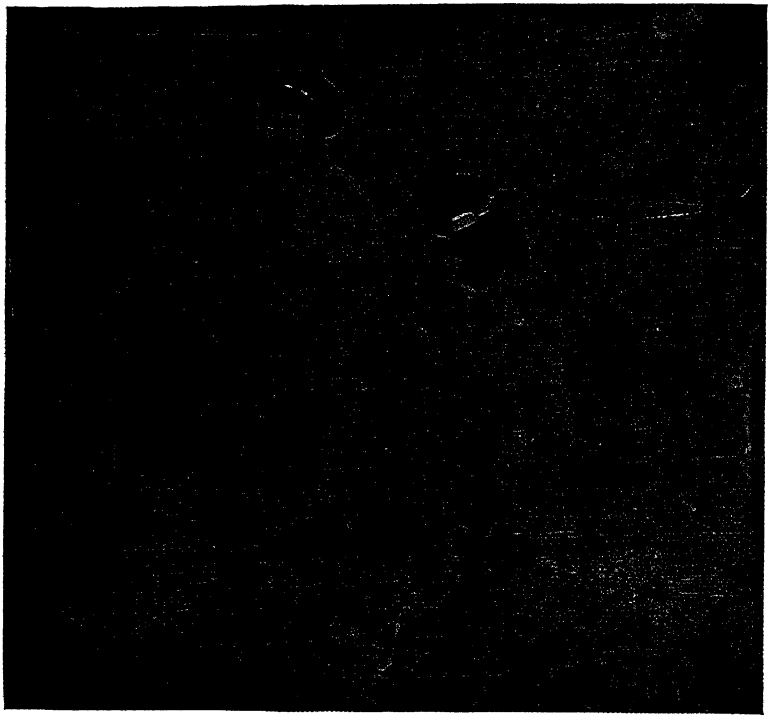


FIGURE 222
Ladies in a palace.
— *Berenson collection, Florence. By courtesy of Mr. Charles Berenson*

shall see what a success this type of humour was to have in later Chinese art and in the religious art, tinged with humour, of Japan.

On the opposite frontier of northern China, in Korea, Japanese archæologists have recently discovered some frescoes of the greatest

interest. Those in the tomb known as that of the "two pillars" (Ssang-yung-chung), near Phyŏng-an, seem to date from the second half of the sixth century — according to Andreas Eckardt, from about

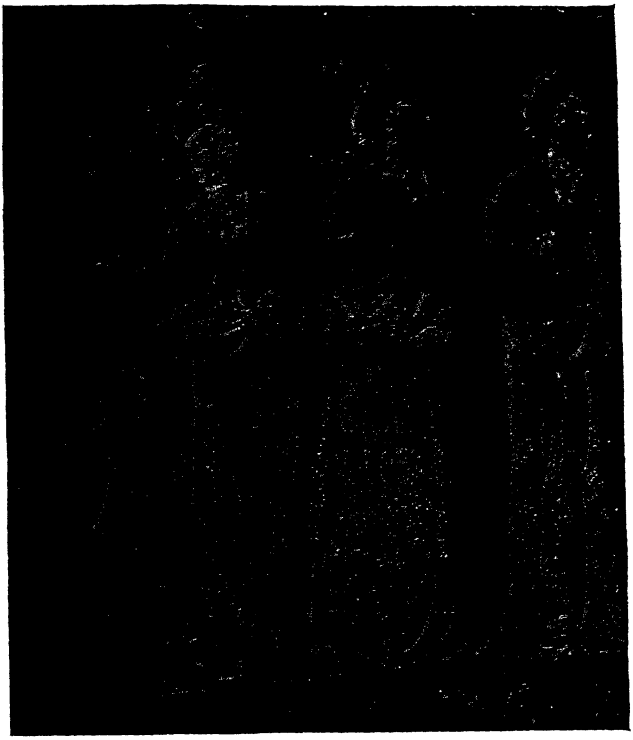


FIGURE 223

Female donors from a cave in Mien-chou, Ssŭ-ch'uan, eighth century.
— *Photo Lartigue, Segalen and de Voisins*

590.[1] The characters represented on these frescoes are noble lords and ladies with their attendants. The noblemen wear a head-dress ornamented in front with two great horns or wings of Mephisto-

[1] Andreas Eckardt: *A History of Korean Art*, English translation by M. Kindersley (London, 1929), p. 135.

phelian-looking feathers. They have bristling moustaches, lightly indicated, and wear ample tunics with a band of fur. One of them is riding on a prancing horse with caparisons, whose elongated, slender



FIGURE 224

Mañjuśrī, painting formerly attributed to Wu Tao-tzŭ, in the Tōfukuji, Kyoto.

— *By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

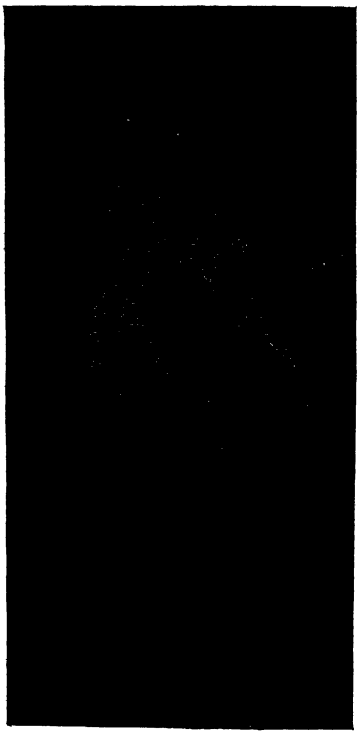


FIGURE 225

Buddha, formerly attributed to Wu Tao-tzŭ, in the Tōfukuji.

— *By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

form recalls the horses of the Wei period or those found at Kūcha rather than the heavy mounts of the T'ang horsemen. One figure, clad in imposing draperies of many colours, and advancing solemnly, preceded by an attendant who bears a censer on his head, would

seem to be a Buddhist priest. The ladies wear, as a rule, a closely pleated and fluted white skirt and a tunic with a band of fur. Their long, white, delicate faces, framed in their black hair, their attitudes of ultra-aristocratic elegance and reserve, the unerring line, the exquisite delicacy of the tones, all reveal a school of court painting



FIGURE 226

Waterfall, painting formerly attributed to Wang Wei, in the Shishokuin, Kyoto. — *By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

which had reached a rare pitch of mastery.[1] In these figures we are not far from the somewhat stiff elegance of the Wei or Sui figurines; nor, in spite of the difference in the fashions, are we far from the roll of Ku K'ai-chih.

The roll of Ku K'ai-chih in the British Museum is one of the most valuable pieces of evidence that we possess with regard to the ancient painting of China. Mr. Binyon even considers that we have here the

[1] Ibid., Pl. I (pp. 120–1), Pl. IV (p. 152), Pl. LXXXII, Fig. 253, 254.

original work of Ku K'ai-chih himself, who lived between about 344 and 406. Professor Pelliot, who has made a special study of the history of this famous roll in the Chinese texts, thinks, on the other hand, that it is more probably a T'ang painting — one of the few T'ang paintings by a true artist which have come down to us — and that it was undoubtedly based on an original by Ku K'ai-chih.[1]

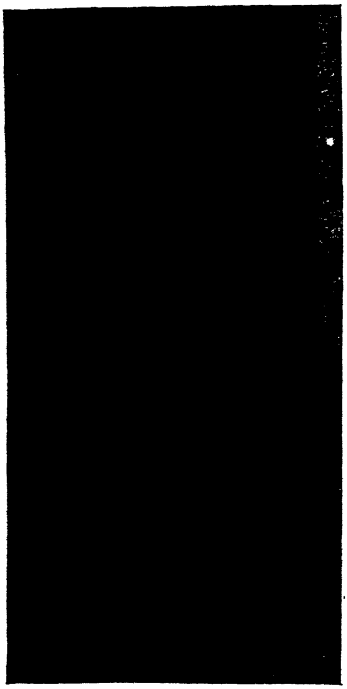


FIGURE 227

Waterfall, landscape formerly attributed to Wu Tao-tzŭ, in the Kōtōin, Kyoto.

— *By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

However this may be, it is a perfect masterpiece. The Tun-huang banners and the Korean frescoes have already provided us with specimens of the work of the provincial schools. Here, however, we have a court school of painting — as is, indeed, indicated by the very title of the text which the scenes on this roll are intended to illustrate: "Exhortations to the mistress for the ladies of the court."[2] One of the scenes shows us a famous episode in which one of the ladies threw herself between the Emperor and a raging bear.[3] Another is a family group, serving as a theme for counsels on the subject of the harmonious life.[4] A third composition represents a toilet scene, in which a lady is having her hair dressed before the mirror (Fig. 221); a fourth shows us a huntsman dropping on one knee and drawing his bow to

[1] Professor Pelliot's lecture of June 16, 1927.
[2] The text is from the hand of one Chang Hua (232–300).
[3] Reproduction in *Burlington Magazine* Monographs, *Chinese Art*, pp. 12–13.
[4] Reproduced by Binyon, *Ars Asiatica*, VI, Pl. XIV, 2.



FIGURE 227b

Landscape in the style of Chao Mēng-fu (fragment).
— *Musée Guimet*

take aim at some birds which are flying away or perching upon a neighbouring mountain.[1]

As Mr. Laurence Binyon and Raphael Petrucci have well said, the moralizing character of these subjects brings us into touch with what was already "the exquisite humanism of a refined society." The treatment is equally perfect. In the female portraits we may admire the long, white faces with their subtle and sophisticated charm, framed in their heavy black hair. The intensity of expression in the eyes, the ethereal elegance of the gestures, the aristocratic ease and spirituality of the attitudes, "the voluptuous caprice of the garments with their long floating folds," the soft, drooping bodies, to which added height is lent by the trains of their robes, all proclaim that the feminine ideal of Far Eastern art has now attained its definitive development — an ideal which was henceforth to remain unchanged in its refined conventionalism from Ku K'ai-chih down to Utamaro, whether the subject treated were a princess or a courtesan. Indeed, the lightness and delicacy of the style, "the subtle mastery of the brush-work," bear witness that this sophisticated poetry of the feminine form (so different from the voluptuous treatment of it in Indian art) has found its perfect medium of expression. Analogies can, of course, be traced between the painting of Ku K'ai-chih and the elongated forms of the Wei terracotta statuettes or the reliefs of Lung-mēn (among others, that dated 641), representing groups of female donors in full dress (cf. Fig. 135 and 223); but between these sculptures and the paintings on the roll lies all the difference that separates the works of an artisan from those of an artist of genius. And, lastly, the treatment of the mountain in the hunting-scene warns us that the art of the Six Dynasties and of the T'ang period is in process of outgrowing its recent stage of development and evolving quite a new canon of art: that of the Sung school.

[1] Ibid., VI, Pl. XIV, 1; see also A. Waley: *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting*, Pl. 3–6.

CHAPTER III

Definitive Establishment of the Chinese Canon of Art

THE SUNG PERIOD: INTELLECTUALIZATION OF THE CHINESE ÆSTHETIC IDEAL

In 907 the T'ang dynasty disappeared before the spread of feudalism and military anarchy. The military leaders, whether Chinese generals or Turkish mercenaries, who contended with one another for its heritage did not succeed in establishing any lasting form of sovereignty; so that the next sixty years witnessed a succession of ephemeral dynasties: the Late Liang (Hou-Liang), from 907 to 923; the Late T'ang, from 923 to 936; the Late Chin (Tsin), from 936 to 946; the Late Han, from 947 to 950, and the Late Chóu, from 951 to 960. But in addition to the five principal houses enumerated above, which were established in Ho-nan, round K'ai-fēng-fu, this period of the Five Dynasties (*Wu-tai*) saw the rise of some ten others, established in the chief provinces, which were practically sovereign in their own region. It was not till 960 that a great national dynasty ascended the throne — that of the Sung emperors, who succeeded in unifying the whole of China, with the exception of the region of Pekin, which had fallen under the power of the K'i-tan (Khitan) Tatars during the time of troubles.

The Sung dynasty maintained itself on the imperial throne for more than three centuries, for it was not definitively dethroned by the Mongols till 1279; but in 1125 their empire was invaded by a Tatar people, the Juchen, which occupied the whole of northern China and even seized the imperial capital, K'ai-fēng-fu. The Sung emperors succeeded, however, in maintaining their position in southern China; and so the country came to be split up into two states: the Sung national empire in the south, with the city of Hang-chou, in Cheh-kiang, as its new capital, and the Juchen kingdom, afterwards known as the Kin kingdom, in the north, with what is now Pekin for its capital. This division lasted till the invasion of the Mongols under Jenghiz-Khan and his successors, who conquered, first the Kin kingdom in 1234, and afterwards, in 1279, the Sung Empire.

The Sung period is of capital importance in the development both of the spirit of China and of its æsthetic ideal.

Let us pass the preceding periods in review. From the Chóu to the end of the T'ang period we have followed the course of an evolution in æsthetic ideals which may be summed up as follows: in the Chóu period we found what may be called an æsthetic ideal expressed in terms of energy — that is, a balance of forces inherent in the substance and still diffused through it, so that the mode of its expression consisted mainly in threatening potentialities. After manifesting itself with paroxysmal force in Ch'in (Ts'in) art this energy emerged and submitted to the ordered form of a graphic, linear art whose leading quality was movement; at the same time the decorative motives, too, emerged from the potential stage and expressed themselves in living forms, full of action and speed; but form, action, and speed alike were invariably expressed in line and moved within the same plane; in short, to repeat Monsieur Vignier's formula, this school of art was "*un pur graphisme*" — that is, its medium of expression was purely graphic or linear. The art of the Six Dynasties continued

to profit by the technique of the living form which had been thus acquired. But now came a period of political and mental upheaval, comprising three centuries of convulsions and invasions, which produced an art marked by a fresh concentration of energy, a sullen, confused, and uneasy energy, which was, however, as in the Chóu period, equally capable of expressing potentialities of volcanic power, though by different means. This forceful and realistic art, embodied in animal forms and recalling that of the Chóu period — which had, however, a more symbolic quality — led up, like the latter, to a period of order, symmetry, and classicism under the T'ang emperors. The tumultuous ardour of the Six Dynasties passed on into the realistic art of the T'ang period, which differed from that of the Han dynasty, firstly, in that it was no longer a linear art confined to one plane surface, but a plastic art working in the round; and, secondly, in that its realism was no longer merely a means of rendering movement, but had become an end in itself, the play of muscle being now admired for its own sake (Fig. 181, 183, 184, 197). At the same time movement as such gradually lost its impetus, and even, if we may so express ourselves, its mobility, for it was now no longer movement that was aimed at, but a parade of force. T'ang realism

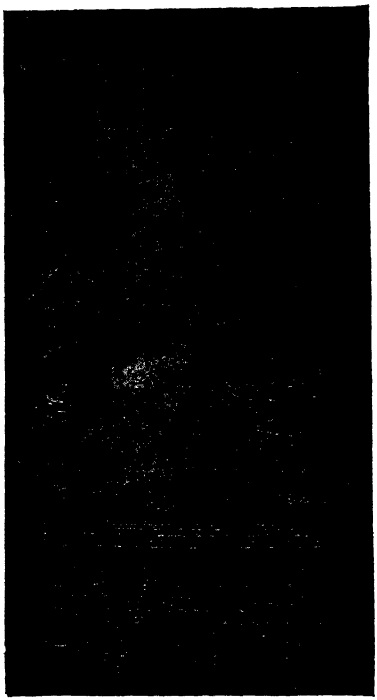


FIGURE 228
Vimalakirti. Painting attributed to Li Lung-mien.
— *Kuroda Naganari collection. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

very rapidly became rhetorical and inflated, incapable of infusing life into the masses of which it was the motive force. Overtaken by a creeping paralysis, it was to degenerate into the clumsiness of the Sung style.

Having reached this point, the evolution of the Chinese æsthetic ideal was complete on the material side. It had said all it had to say, and from this time onward — in sculpture, for instance — could do no more than repeat commonplace themes devoid of character. Yet Chinese art not only did not expire at the end of the T'ang period: it even went on till the eighteenth century; indeed, immediately after the fall of the T'ang dynasty it was to produce the masterpieces of painting and ceramic art which marked the Sung period. What, then, was the secret of this renaissance, if not that we have here a complete change, not only in the function of art, but in the faculty to which it made its appeal? The *material* ideal of previous ages was succeeded by one based upon the *intellectual* faculties, for which the outer world, its forms and forces, were simply the medium for the expression of its ideals. The Sung period witnessed the *intellectualization of the Chinese æsthetic ideal.*

It is true that the elements of this transformation were already in existence during the period of the T'ang and Six Dynasties. While the vogue of realism was still at its height, the roll of Ku K'ai-chih could show an allusive style of painting, in which, for example, the female form was no more than a medium for the expression of inward feelings. But T'ang poetry is particularly instructive in this connexion. While the most typical qualities of the works of art belonging to this period were still external, consisting in symmetry and realism, the T'ang poets, such as Li T'ai-po (or Li Po, 701–762), Tu Fu (712–770), Wang Wei (699–759), T'ao Han, and Po Chü-i (772–846), foreshadow the very different type of mind which was to come. What these poets were seeking was no longer the world of concrete forms, the real universe, but an idealized reflection of this uni-

verse — what European romanticism was later to call the " soul of things."

It cannot be denied that this is in some sort due to Buddhist mys-

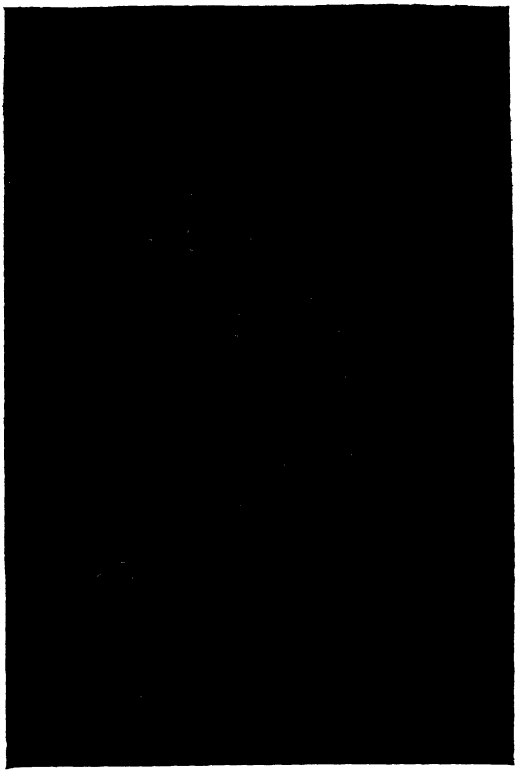


FIGURE 229

Kuan-yin. Painting attributed to Li Lung-mien.
— *Ulrich Odin collection. By courtesy of M. Odin. Photo, Laniepce*

ticism: we have only to read the T'ang poets to learn what they owe to the dreams of Mahāyāna Buddhism. But it would be an error to suppose that this factor was entirely of Indian origin. The Mahāyāna Buddhism taught in the Far East in the eighth and ninth centuries

had already become to a very large extent Chinese. Moreover, India itself was then in process of abandoning Buddhism, which, on taking refuge in China, assumed a new aspect and even gave rise to what was in effect a new religion, unknown to Indian Buddhism, and known as Amidism. The ancient native mysticism and sense of poetry, grounded in Taoism, were now to inspire its manifestations quite as much as the themes, whether of dogma or legend, once imported from Sanskrit lands. We have only to compare an Indian Buddhist poem — for instance the *Lalitavistara* or the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* — with the poetry of the Buddhist literati of the T'ang age, such as Po Chü-i or Liu Tsung-yüan. In the Indian poems, on the one hand, we find, no doubt, a delightful poetry rich in every subtlety of feeling and sensuous delight, but, whether in one sphere or the other, appealing to a plastic sense which makes India appear to us, on the whole, as a wider Greece, a tropical Greece eschewing the " golden mean." Among the Chinese, on the other hand, we find a poetry which is a record of subtle impressions and seems to shrink, not only from profusion, but even from too concrete a materiality: a poetry of impressions, powerfully but often briefly recorded, barely hinted at before they become blurred; a poetry which, instead of seeking concrete expression, as it did in India, by descending from its metaphysical inspiration into the material world of images, seems to be for ever ascending the transcendental path from its starting-point in reality towards its bourne in the immaterial and unexpressed. Nothing can be more obvious than that T'ang poetry profited by the enrichment of its sensibility afforded by Buddhist themes. But, having duly noted this, we cannot omit to add that its synthetic ecstasy in the presence of nature — conceived as a symbol of the inexpressible — is a purely native attitude of mind. To convince ourselves of this we have only to go back to the prodigious poetic flights of the Taoist Fathers previous to the introduction of any form of Buddhism into the Far East.

Perhaps we may even regard this attitude of mind as one of the most constant factors in Chinese thought. At the very origins of Chinese thought — for instance, in the Chóu bronzes — we found an ideal of art of an immanent and potential order, consisting in a sense of the mystery diffused through things and of latent cosmic forces. It is this which distinguishes the Chinese æsthetic ideal from those of all the other classic civilizations — whether of Egypt, Chaldeo-Assyria, Greece, or India; for the latter clothe themselves in shapes which are concrete and finite, expressing themselves in animal and lastly, in their final and supreme phase, in anthropomorphic forms. Just as in primitive times the bronze-founder had been content to leave the onlooker to divine the scattered elements of the *t'ao-t'ieh* in his poem in bronze, so the Sung masters of painting in wash, by a line no sooner begun than swallowed up in mist, allow us a bare glimpse of the infinite distances in which the soul of the landscape lurks. But this synthetic conception of mystery, a conception of the underlying nature of things so preponderantly intellectual and so little sensuous in character, naturally assumed a totally different moral expression. Instead of the mask of terror in which the primitive bronzists thought they saw the riddle for an instant face to face, we now see how, after ages of Taoist ecstasies and Mahāyānist tenderness, the T'ang poets and their counterparts in painting, the Sung artists, discerned the soul of the cosmos in the lines of a landscape bathed in mist and lost in infinite distances, which make it as poignant as a human countenance. And such landscapes do indeed show the face of the world, in which the whole value of the changing and ephemeral outward form lies in the fact that it expresses the universal essence. The more the face of waters, mountains, and valleys is blurred with haze and softened by distance, the more easily will it be possible to divine the cosmic essence which animates it. The mystery of terror has become a metaphysical mystery. Terror before the unknowable All has become transmuted in the course of the centuries into a passionate

striving for communion with it. Yet, in spite of all, the æsthetic conception which serves as the starting-point for these two modes of expression remains the same. The proof of this is that, in spite of the melancholy with which this mysticism was evidently imbued, it rarely takes the form of casual sentimentality or personal romanticism. It always remains essentially intellectual and generalized, transcending mere personal emotion. It may, then, be permissible to sum up our argument as follows: in spite of the differences in expression and technique that separate a refined culture from a society made up of primitive beings, none the less in the nature-school of the T'ang and Sung poets and painters the Chinese æsthetic ideal, having exhausted all the possibilities of realism during the six or eight centuries for which it had evolved in logical accordance with its essential nature, was reverting to the most ancient element in its history: that is, to a conception of nature as animated by an immanent force.[1]

In the formation of this new æsthetic ideal, purely intellectual in principle and purely impressionist in its mode of expression, the poets always led the way for the artists, as must needs have happened in an art which is first and foremost the prerogative of a lettered class, an art of calligraphers, or "art of the brush." And this is how the powerful poetry of the T'ang period came to inspire the poignant landscape of the Sung school, while Sung poetry, which was already in some respects more sophisticated and conventional, was reflected chiefly in Ming landscape art. But without discussing this question in detail, let us but glance through the works of the great T'ang poets, such as Li T'ai-po and Tu Fu, or their Sung successors, such as Ou-yang Hsiu (or Ngou-yang Hsiu) (1007–74) and Su Shih (1036–1101), and we shall find in them most of the philo-

[1] See A. Waley: *Zen Buddhism* (London, 1922); id., *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting* (London, 1923); Otto Fischer: *Chinesische Landschaftsmalerei* (Munich, 1921); L. Binyon: *Painting in the Far East*, p. 120: "The Sung Period in China."

sophical and picturesque themes that are treated by the Sung landscape painters.[1]

In Li T'ai-po we find a sense of the transiency of all things, symbolized by the flow of the waters of a river: "All things flow by together, both events and men, like these unresting waters of the Yang-tze on their way to lose themselves in the sea." Or, again, we have the sense of hazy distances among the mountains and of the mystery that emanates from them: "Evening having fallen, I descend from the mountain with its bluish hues; the mountain moon seems to follow the walker and bear him company, and if he turns round to see how far he has come, his glance is lost in the mists of night." Or we have a reverie by moonlight: "The moon casts a vivid light before my bed. For a moment I am in doubt whether it is not white frost sparkling upon the ground. I raise my head and gaze at the shining moon, I droop my head and think of my country." Or here is an autumn landscape broadly and rapidly sketched: "The time has already come when we can see the whirl of yellow leaves among the mountains. Let us ascend this tower, from which the glance can rove into the distance. The grey clouds trail their long, tattered shapes towards the sea. On all sides the signs of approaching autumn present themselves to our melancholy eyes." Or further on we have this aspiration towards the immensity of space: "I am powerless to detain the parting yesterday, nor can I banish the bitterness of today that wrings my heart. Already the birds of passage are arriving flock by flock, borne on the autumn wind. I will mount up to my look-out and, filling my cup, gaze out into the distance. I dream of the great poets of past ages, but to equal these sublime geniuses one would have to raise oneself up to the pure heavens and look upon the stars from closer at hand. . . . In vain should I try to drown my grief. When things do not go in harmony with his desires in this life, man can but cast himself into a boat and drift with

[1] For the spirit of Chinese landscape, see Otto Fischer, op. cit.

blown hair at the caprice of the waves. . . ." This whole poem, as we shall see, forms the subject of a sea-scape of the eleventh century.

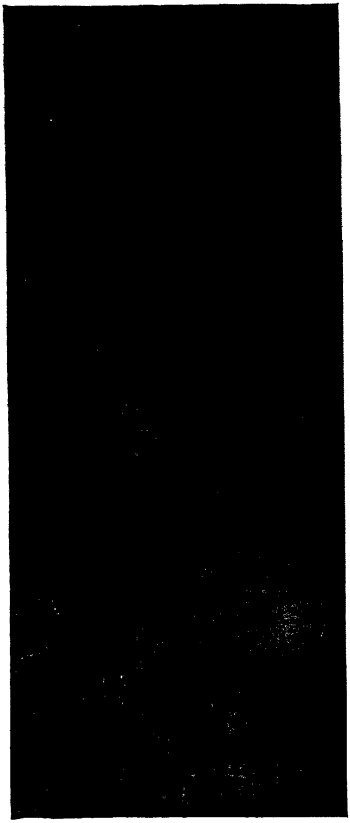


FIGURE 230
Storm, landscape attributed to Hui-tsung.
— *Kuonji Temple, Minobu. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

In the poet Tu Fu we find another sea-piece, the equivalent to which we shall also find in a Sung landscape in wash: "To the south the mountain rises abruptly from the limpid mass, and its reflected image plunges trembling into the waters and darkens them. But the sun is sinking, the boat glides with a slight plashing sound past the pagoda with its pavilions which pierce the clouds, and soon the moon shows herself and in her turn mirrors herself in the lake." Or again: "Last evening dark clouds hung over the path which leads to my dwelling, the lights of the river-boats shone isolated in the darkness like points of light." Or the following landscape and meditation among the mountains are again due to Tu Fu: "The wind is keen, the clouds ride high, the monkey utters his lamentable cries; on the silvery edge of the transparent waters birds brush against the sand in their wheeling flight. On all sides is heard the rustle of falling leaves, and before one's eyes are the swollen waters of the great river, which come on and on, yet are never exhausted. Ah, to see nothing far and wide save the desolate face of autumn, and to feel oneself a stranger wheresoever

one may go! . . ." The same poet has given us an even more telling impression of winter: "Each separate leaf is seen, withered beneath the crystals of white frost. A cold wind searches the valley, puffing and rustling among the trees. The ever swelling waters of the great river, with their swift, tossing waves, seem as though they would mount up to the skies. The clouds on the mountains meet and lose themselves in the mists of the plain. I am like a frail bark bound to the shore by a chain. . . ." Or again: "I gaze with absent eyes at the wild vegetation of the rocks, lit up by the moon, and below, in the dim half-light which they reflect, at the sandy islands in the river, with their reeds already in flower."

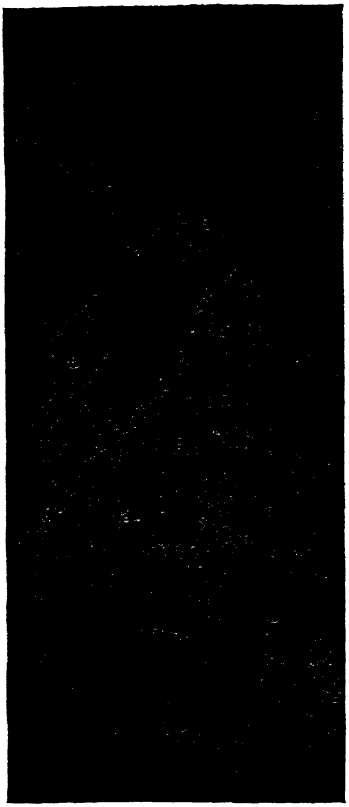


FIGURE 231
Winter landscape, attributed to Ma Yüan.
— *Sakai Tadamichi collection. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

In the poems of Wang Po, who died in 618, we find the following meditation on an old deserted palace, a subject often treated by the Sung painters: "No one visits the palace now save, in the morning, the mists of the river-banks, and at night the rain, which frets the blinds into tatters. Idle clouds float slowly by, mirrored in the limpid waters. How many autumns have already passed over this palace? . . . The young king who lived here would gaze as we now gaze upon the great river which for ever rolls its deep, silent waters." In the same poet we find the following verse, of a poignant

impressionism: "This is the hour when forests and pools grow dark, when from the midst of the piled-up rocks the mists of evening slowly rise." In the same vein Yang Ch'iung (who died in 690) tells of the old fisherman who spends the night stretched on the rocks on the western shore: "So soon as day breaks, he kindles bamboos and draws water for his frugal meal. The morning mist rises, the sun appears, the country-side is still deserted; already he is in his boat, striking the green waters with his oars and uttering the boatmen's cry. With a glance he has scanned the horizon and abandons himself to the current without a care, as the clouds abandon themselves to the caprice of the wind, running and chasing one another above the mountains." This subject, too, of the old fisherman on the edge of the shore or lost in his boat amid the infinite distances of a sea-scape we shall find in Sung paintings (Fig. 233).

Ch'ēn Tzŭ-ang (Ch'ēn Tzŭ-ngang), who wrote about 685, sang the theme, afterwards illustrated in many a picture, of the poet sitting meditating beneath the trees, face to face with vast empty space: "Just as one fine day after another goes by in its flight, never to return, so the spring follows its rapid course and is already approaching its decline. Plunged in a reverie without end, I know not whither my thoughts are roving. I lie beneath the great trees and contemplate the eternal work. . . . How many living beings have not been annihilated since the days of old, with their great flights of wild geese! If the most popular man of past centuries were to return today, who would recognize him? . . . The autumn wind is rising amid the quivering leaves; the flowers of this year are dying and fall, borne away on it; but the perfume of the flower, what becomes of it in the end?" The same poet has given us the following impression of the dawn: "I will not think of the road which awaits me till the hour when we have to part, when this shining moon has disappeared behind the great trees and the first gleams of dawn have blotted out the Milky Way."

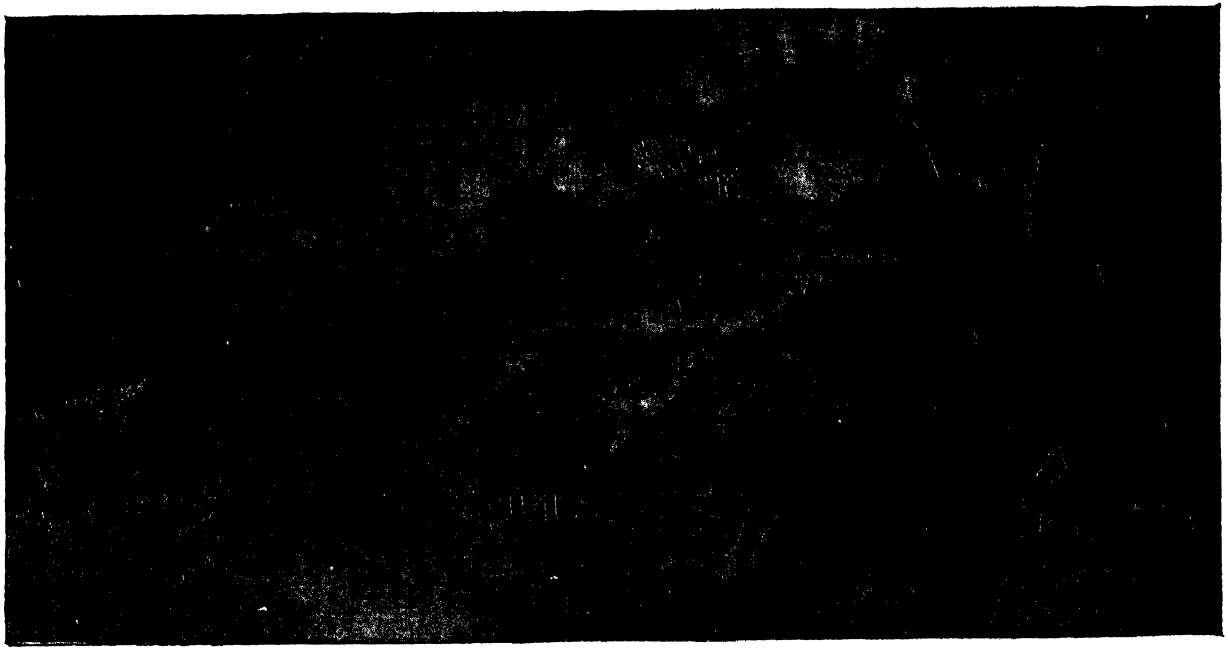


FIGURE 232

Gathering of mythological beings overlooking the sea.
— Landscape attributed to Ma Lin. Musée Guimet

Again, we have the theme of the monastery hidden among the mountains, which we shall find illustrated on a whole series of rolls. It is here treated by Sung Chih-wen: "The rain from Mount Ki-shan had swept rapidly past on the boisterous wind. The sun appeared, pure and radiant, above the western peak, the trees in the southern valley seemed more leafy and verdant. I wended my way towards the holy dwelling, where a venerable bonze gave me a kindly welcome. The monk and I were united in one and the same thought; we had exhausted all that words could say and we remained silent. I looked upon the flowers, as motionless as ourselves; I listened to the birds hovering in space; and I understood the great truth."

A similar theme is the visit to the convent in the mountains, described in the poems of T'ao Han: "The pines and cypresses conceal the mountain gorge, but I have discovered a narrow path on the west. The sky clears, a peak shows itself, and, as though born out of space, a convent rises up before my eyes. The building seems to stand upon a terrace of clouds, it raises its tall pavilion into the air amid the steep rocks. Night falls, the monkeys and the birds are silent. The sound of bells and the chant of the bonzes rise above the chill clouds. I gaze upon the blue peaks and the moon, which mirrors itself in the waters of the lake; I listen to the sound of the springs and the wind as it lashes the leaves at the torrent's edge. My soul has soared beyond what is visible, at once wanderer and captive, in a wondrous ravishment. And so the dawn surprises me; soon the face of all things will change. Already the darkness is melting away towards the east on the slope of the giant rocks; already the surface of the waters is lit up with a sparkling gleam, the herald of the dawn, and little by little the paling rays of the moon are losing their brightness."

With this description at our side, let us turn over the pages of a book of Sung landscapes: here we shall find the whole scene, from the "peak born out of space" to the convent, "standing on a bank

of clouds," which "raises its tall pavilions into the air amid the steep rocks." (Cf. Fig. 232.)

Kao Shih, a contemporary of Tu Fu, sings of "the return to the mountain," in a short miniature-like poem, thrilling with varied im-

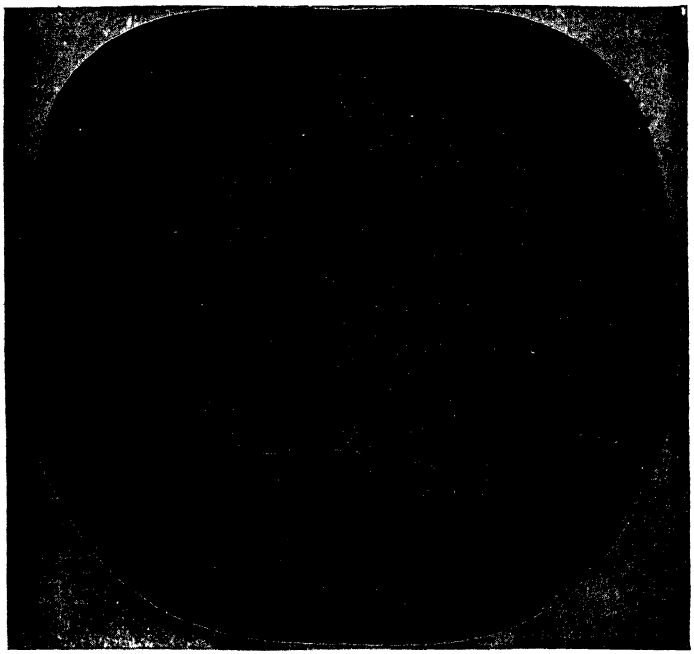


FIGURE 233
Sea-scape attributed to Ma Kuei.
— *Magosoki Kyohei collection. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

pressions: "At the hour when one hears no murmur save that of the springs, no sound save that of the wind and rain." Or, again, we have an impression of mountain distances by the melancholy light of the moon: "In a deserted and silent spot, on a cold moonlight night, the solitary traveller, as he steps into his boat, sees the deep green waters lashed by the wind, and the mountains on the shore show him their

autumn face. An indefinable melancholy steals over his soul." (Cf. Fig. 237.)

From the painter poet Wang Wei we have the theme of the mossy spring and the cabin in the forest: "The mountain is all silence and solitude. . . . I love the pure springs which wind among the rocks;

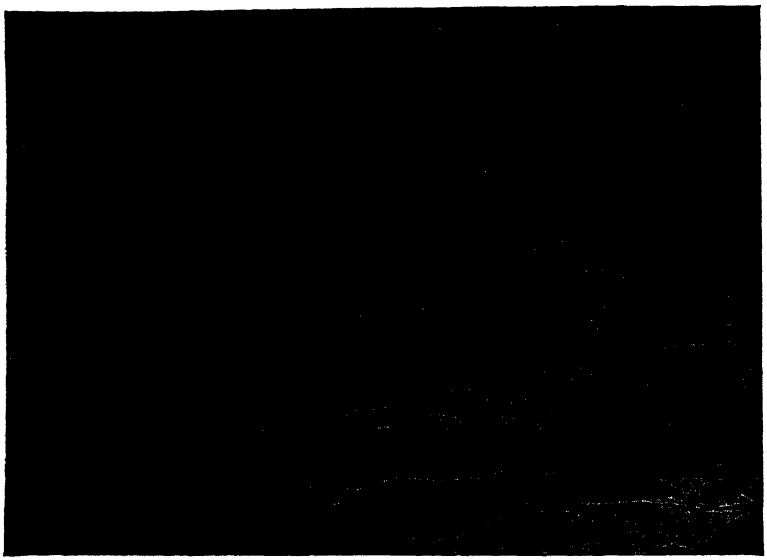


FIGURE 234
Painting attributed to Hsia Kuei.
— *Iwasaki collection. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

I love a rustic cabin, nestling peacefully among the pine-trees." (Cf. Fig. 240.)

Or here is a background for a picture from Mēng Hao-jan: "For horizon, the blue mountains, whose peaks stand out against the sky"; or, again, this marvellous impression of evening: "The sinking sun has crossed the chain of yonder lofty mountains, and soon all the valleys are lost in the shades of evening. The moon rises from among the pine-trees, bringing coolness in its train; the breath of the winds and

the trickle of the brooks fill my ear with pure sounds. The woodman regains his shelter to restore his exhausted strength, the bird has chosen its branch and is already perched on it in motionless repose. I take up my lute and lose myself in solitude among the grassy paths."

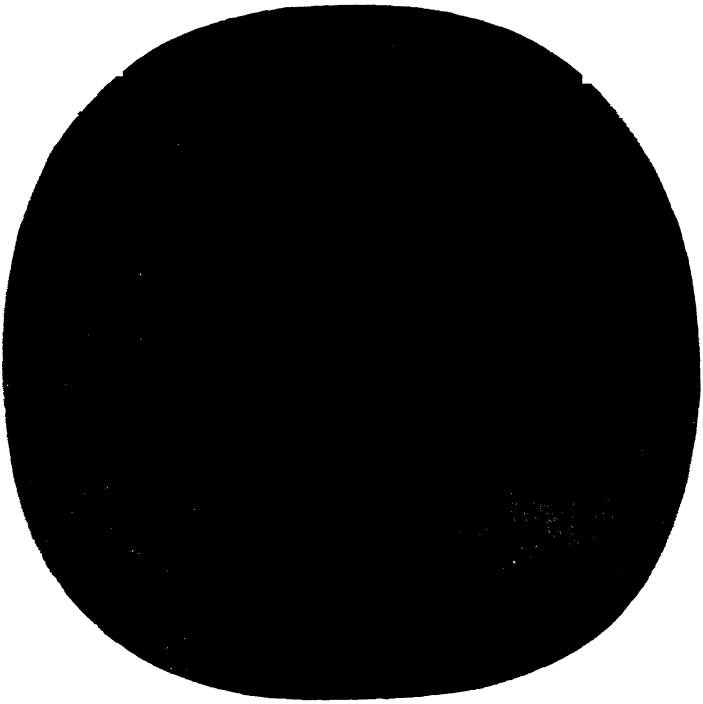


FIGURE 234b
Snowy landscape attributed to Hsia Kuei.
— *Shimitsu collection, Kyoto. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

Sometimes these learned T'ang poets sketch a whole series of fleeting landscapes before our eyes, as, for instance, in the following poem of Chang Ch'ien on a night among the mountains: " Seated upon a slope of the mountain, I followed with my eyes a frail bark, the symbol of our destiny, as it floated lightly upon the deep waters.

It sailed away and was lost to sight, it melted into the vast sky, while the sun was quenching its fires on the opposite horizon. Suddenly all that was passing before my eyes was suddenly plunged into the half-light of an uncertain dimness. The sun's last rays now lit up only the tree-tops and the summits of the rocks. The surface of the waters became darker and darker. Soon none but a few red clouds marked where the sun had disappeared. The islands in the lake stood out black upon the tranquil waters, on which still lay a lingering light reflected from the sky, but already the darkness lay heavy upon the woods and hills, and the horizon was now no more than a vague line before my powerless eyes. Night falls, the air is keen, there is a stir in it afar off, the north wind harshly raises its whistling note, the water-birds seek a shelter on the sandy shore, where they will wait for dawn, cowering among the reeds."

We may also note what we may call the metaphysical aspect of these mountain landscapes as revealed to us by Wang Ch'ang-ling: "The mountains and those who inhabit their blue-tinged summits have but to turn their head and they see themselves cut off from the world by the clouds. At such a height as this, human passions are powerless to agitate them." Time and again the T'ang poets celebrate the beauty of these retreats: "I plunged," sings Chu Wēn, "into a more and more deserted region, already I could no longer see a trodden path. Cloud-crowned mountains close in the hidden valley on all sides. Here and there alone are a few scattered cottages, whose smoke rises at wide intervals." We shall see this "literary landscape" transferred line for line to silk by the Sung artists; while there are a dozen or more paintings in wash which give concrete expression to Ting Huan's "dawn among the mountains in winter": "The mountain tops still sleep in the morning cold, but the plants covered with hoar-frost sparkle beneath the first rays of daylight. The trees filter the sun through the network of their bare branches. The dry leaves rustle beneath the light tread of the deer. My fingers yield

to the feelings with which I am filled, and draw music from the harmonious lute. I sing the farewell of the deep night to the clear water of the brook." (Cf. Fig. 231 and 234 b.)

The landscapes of Cheh-kiang, with the charm of their coastal valleys and their jagged mountain peaks, so shrouded in mist as to seem almost unreal, have a special attraction for the T'ang poets, as they were afterwards to have for the Sung painters: "Behold us," sings Ts'ui Hao, "in the land of white mist and verdant forests. Whether we advance or stay still, we are always in the midst of water and of cloud, while the trembling image of the mountains follows every motion of the boat on the limpid waters. Now the echo issues from some deep cavern to answer you, now one comes to some tranquil valley whose very silence invites one to lift up one's voice." (Cf. Fig. 234, 238.)

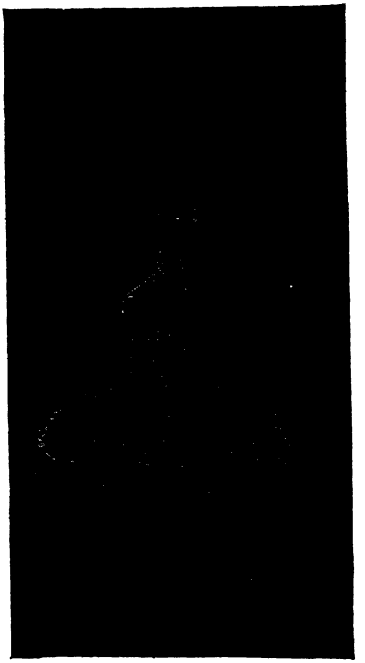


FIGURE 235
Kuan-yin, attributed to Mu Ch'i, in the Daitokuji, Kyoto.
— *By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

Even the theme of the old tree, whether fallen or raising its bare, contorted, solitary form, was treated by the T'ang poets before the Sung painters: "The old tree lying at the water's edge showed its roots, stripped of all bark, among the mud and pebbles. In spring its only verdure was the moss; the winter snow brought it the only flowers with which it might cover itself." (Cf. Fig. 230.)

Besides the theme of the solitary hermit we also find that of the old woodman: "Sometimes among the mountains I seat myself be-

side a Taoist bonze and converse with him, sometimes I walk along in company with a poor woodman." (Cf. Fig. 239.)

All these themes were to be taken over, developed, and often given new life by the Sung poets. The poetess Chu Shu-chēng, in the twelfth century, describes in charming stanzas a subject which we shall frequently see reproduced in painting — the return from boating on the lake in the evening: " Mountain tops folded in the evening light! " Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105) sings the praises of the venerable pine-trees, which are also a favourite motive in Sung paintings in wash: " Over the great pines which rise up from the valley the wind, the rain, and the frost have passed. The pine-trees, with their greenish blue beards, send up their dragon's snarl as high as the sun and moon." The same poet sketches a " view over the river " just as Hsia Kuei was soon to do: " To the right the waters of the river are hidden from me by the trees, in the mist, but to the left one can see no bounds to the flowing stream. And my thoughts, too, have no bounds save those of a floating dream." Fan Ch'eng-ta (1126–93) describes scenes which might be entitled " late evening in spring " and " the hermitage on the Peak of the Lotus-flowers ": " The mountains of the Celestial Terrace rise to a height of a hundred and eighty thousand feet, and the Peak of the Lotus-flowers is the highest of them all. The hermitage is built facing the mountain, and there it raises its solitary head. The hermit in his solitude goes and comes at his own sweet will. After wandering for twenty springs above the clouds, beyond the seas and lakes, he has returned here to live in his solitary hut. The great pine-trees round his house are his only neighbours. At break of day he lights a vase of perfumes on a rock, and from that moment he is filled with the bliss of union with heaven and earth." The poet and philosopher Chu Hsi (1130–1200) was afterwards to sing of " the farm on the brink of the lake," and this, too, is a perfect Sung landscape: " For ten *lis* the blue-green mountains overhang the lake. At the edge of the water the scene defies description. The evening light enfolds the cottage where the traveller sips his wine. The

moon lights up a little bridge, on which sits a fisherman. The bamboos surrounding the thatched farm-house stretch away down to the water." We shall find all these impressions in the contemporary paintings in wash. Or, again, here is a sketch by Tai Fu-ku, which we may call " a village on the river at twilight ": " The water in its ebb has left the fishing-boats on the sloping shore. Two white egrets stand motionless at the water's edge. But they see a passer-by, take fright, and, rising into the air, make their way in among the flowering reeds." The same poet has painted in words a " moonlight night in a boat ": " The whole boat is flooded with light by the moon, which shines pure in the vastness of space. Not a ripple ruffles the greenish water, so subdued is the breath of the night. . . . My soul, in a dream, flits hither and thither, to the sound of the oars. The cold light of the constellations strikes down into the green jade of the waters. The melancholy cries of storks and wild geese are borne on the breeze which blows from the passes of Hung-liao. A few dots of fire, which are the fishermen's lanterns, are scattered along the ageless shore. And now the boat pauses by a ruined bridge beneath the trees, from which splash down drops of dew." (Cf. Fig. 234.)

Again, the same poet once more takes up the old T'ang subject of the visit to



FIGURE 236
Landscape attributed to Hsiu-chien.
— *Ulrich Odin collection. By courtesy of M. Odin*

the lonely monastery: "In a deserted land, but rarely visited by men, among the mountains where the chill waters had now begun to freeze, the tinkle of a bell guided me towards a monastery. I met no priest upon my way. The branches of the ancient trees stretched out over the crumbling moats. A trailing vine of a great age clung to the ruined roofs." The same note of sensitive impressionism characterizes the poem in which later, in the thirteenth century, Sung Po-jen was to sing the Song of the Fisherman, full of exquisite pictures in miniature: "My little bark vies with the wild goose. It plunges fearless into the heart of the waves. My cloak of reeds and my hat of plaited bamboo defy the downpours on the great river surrounded by age-old mountains. My song follows the beat of my short oars, as I gaze upon the reddening foliage of the distant forest, in front of the village beneath the moon, which has not yet sunk below the horizon." And the whole ideal of Sung art, as well as the philosophic spirit of his age, is summed up by Sung Po-jen in the following words: "To build a terrace in a deserted land and enjoy from it the purity of the evenings; to watch the rain veiling the heavy foot of the clouds, while the light bodies of the swallows are borne away on the wind." (Cf. Fig. 240, 241.)

This intellectualist impressionism had to find its fitting medium of expression in painting; and the medium it discovered was monochrome painting in washes of Chinese ink. Colour, such as the T'ang artists had loved, produces heaviness and realism. The Chinese ink line follows untrammelled the soaring line of the very thought itself — a pure, simple line which seems to empty forms of their material content and transform them into something purely ideal. A Sung landscape in wash may embrace in its ample sweep both mountains and plains; yet it none the less hovers above the concrete like cloud-piled palaces at sunset. And, as though to avoid all that might hold us fettered to the material aspect of things, even this line often fails to

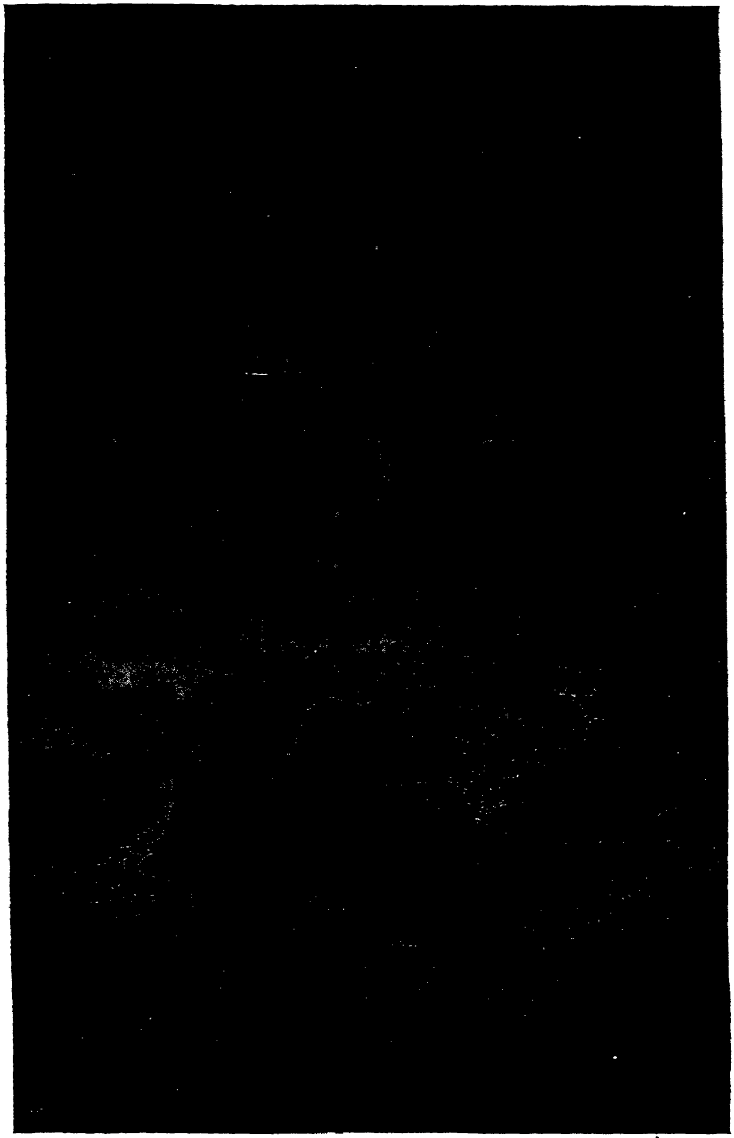


FIGURE 237
Landscape in the Sung style.
— *C. T. Loo collection*

complete the design which it has begun, and leaves the thought hanging in suspense over a distance that is barely indicated. This is an art that suggests more than it expresses. It is an exact replica of T'ang poetry in the sphere of painting, having as its sole aim to offer food for meditation. Here it is not the painter who executes the landscape, but each spectator, who composes it for himself out of the elements furnished by the painter.

The use of wash in landscape brings with it yet another technical invention: that of aerial perspective. Since colour is no longer there to distinguish one plane from another, and since, moreover, part of the picture represents nothing but space, what means is there of rendering this impression of space, which is the very soul of the landscape? The masters of painting in wash had noticed that in nature the layers of air coming between the spectator and the object blur colour and render form indistinct. They indicated distance in space by a skilful gradation of tones, by trailing vapours floating over waters and valleys, or by mountain tops and distances bathed in mist. When they retained a minimum of colouring, they had recourse to the *luo-ch'ing* process, in which aerial perspective was expressed by using the values of malachite green or lapis-lazuli blue for the foregrounds and backgrounds; or else they used pure colour for the foregrounds, while for the more distant planes they mixed the colours with Chinese ink, which darkened them without in any way diminishing their transparency. In so doing they invented chiaroscuro and half-tones (*hsüan*, or *hsiuan*) — in short, impressionism, by means of which the Chinese landscape-painters obtained effects of amazing mastery; for often, though the outline of the distant plane is not so much as indicated, the haze which bathes the foreground suffices to convey a sense of vast spaces and boundless horizons. To quote Petrucci: "The haze lends a magical aspect to an impression of emptiness and immensity."

This haze in Chinese paintings in wash imparts to the face of the earth the poignant expression, at once remote and penetrating, that

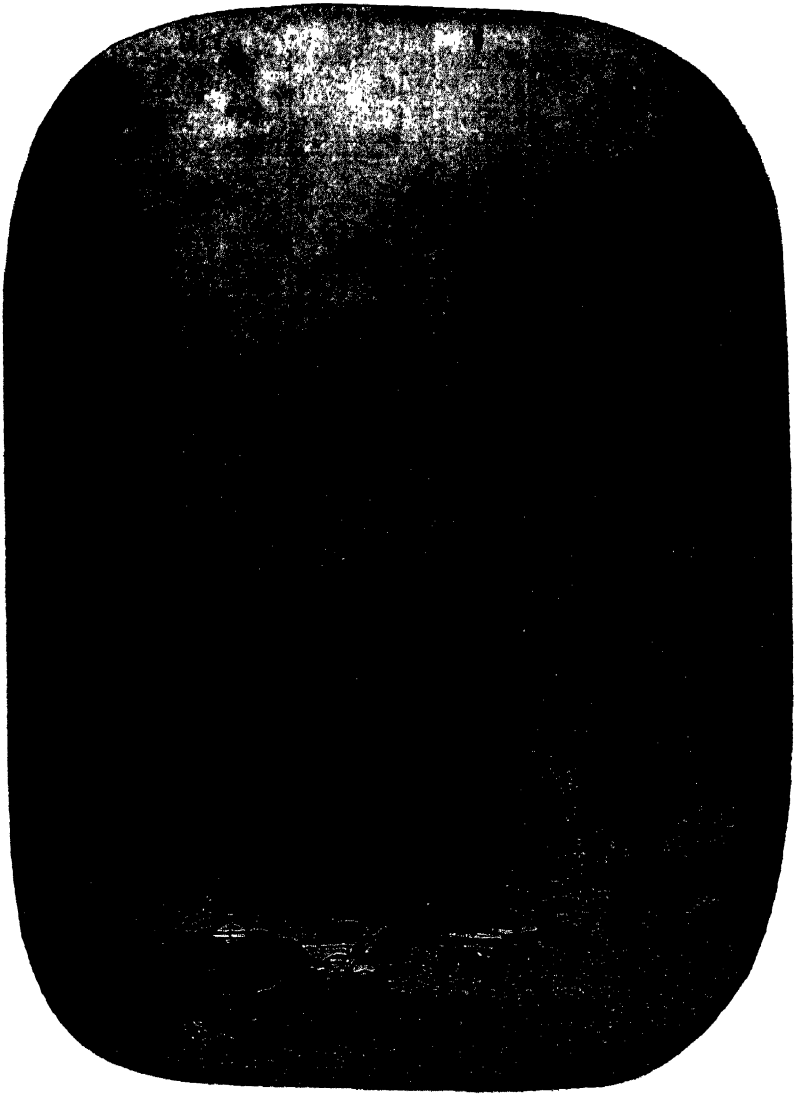


FIGURE 238

Landscape in the Sung style.

— Formerly in the C. T. Loo collection. Photo, Loo

can be seen on human faces in certain portraits in chiaroscuro — by Rembrandt or by Carrière, for instance — in which a purely intellectual quality is arrived at by a blurring and subordination of the material features.

Hence the difference between European impressionism and that of Sung landscape. European impressionism consists in sketches which are deliberately tentative, in infinitesimal touches and retouches, and in composition, and is the outcome of a refined sensuousness. In Sung painting in wash, on the contrary, though the line may be blurred in haze and deliberately disappear so soon as it has set the spectator dreaming, yet the hand that traced it did so, none the less, with an unbroken movement, and the effects of mist, far from interrupting or weakening the whole effect, merely bring it out more powerfully. And so, while our impressionism has become purely analytical and individual, Sung impressionism remains mainly synthetic, generalized, and intellectual.

The only defect of this art is that, thanks to the ingenuity of the Chinese, it soon came to be crystallized into a certain number of ready-made conventions, by virtue of which a pupil could produce the picturesque, the natural, or the dreamlike automatically. We shall find a list of these devices in the *Revelation of the Secrets of Painting*, associated with the name of the painter Wang Wei. But the effects of these conventional recipes for the fabrication of inspiration were not really felt till the Ming period.

The same principles were applied to portraiture.

As far back as we can go, we can guess that there was an art of portraiture in China, for it was required both for funeral representations of the dead and for the figures of donors on Buddhist votive offerings: these portraits were either of historical or contemporary characters, of dignitaries in robes of state, or of women of the upper classes in ceremonial attire. The group of donors at Lung-mēn are reliefs of a thoroughly pictorial character (Fig. 135–138) and al-



FIGURE 239

The sage in the forest, Sung painting.

— Stoclet collection, Brussels. By courtesy of M. Stoclet

ready belong to this category, as do the donors at Tun-huang; while in the elegant female figures on the roll of Ku K'ai-chih — whether it belong to the Six Dynasties or the T'ang period — we already find this technique fully master of its resources in a work of subtle delicacy from the hand of a true artist.

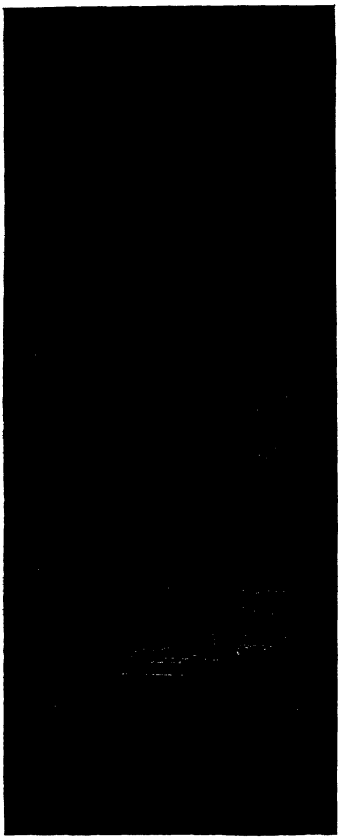


FIGURE 240
Landscape by Sun Chun-ssŭ (Suen Chuen-ssŭ), Yüan period.
— *Iwasaki Koyata collection. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

Whether Sung portraiture deals with contemporary figures or with reconstitutions of religious or historical characters, it is the outcome of this tradition. The quality which it has in common with the landscape-painting of the same period is that, like this, it is essentially intellectualist, or, better still, animist.

Indeed, as Professor Elisséev recently reminded us,[1] in China, as in ancient Egypt, portraiture had a religious and social function to fulfil: since primitive times it had been connected with ancestor-worship, for its purpose was to transmit the spirit of the ancestor to his descendants, to bequeath them his soul, his character, and his personality. Starting as he did from this point of view, the artist would naturally make it his chief aim to charge his likeness with mental potentialities, to transform it into a vehicle of psychic qualities. In order to effect this he would have to make a selection from among the elements pro-

[1] In a lecture delivered at the Musée Guimet on December 19, 1929.

vided by his living subject, choosing the essential features of his character and, with this object in view, not hesitating to treat two factors which might really be consecutive as though they existed contemporaneously. Hence Sung portraiture, in so far as it aims at offering a synthesis corresponding to the manifold character of the personality which its object is to sum up, may be called " simultaneist " in character, and therefore prefers the three-quarter face pose, which makes it possible to give at the same time an impression of the face and of the profile, a different look for each of the eyes, and, in general, the juxtaposition in a single picture of several " surveys (*aperçus*) " of the same personality, the sum of these views constituting precisely what we call the personality.

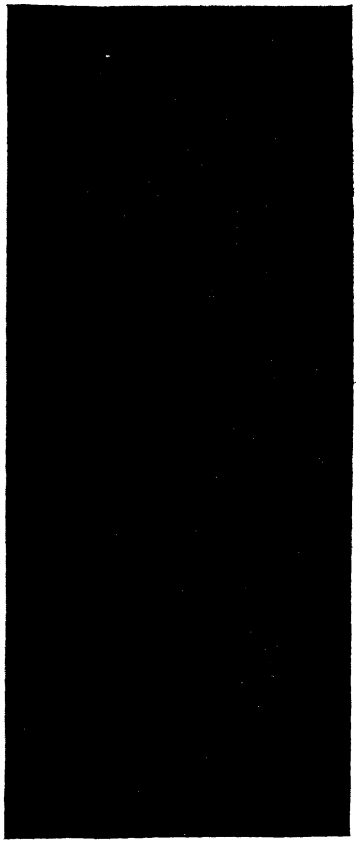


FIGURE 241
Sung or Yüan landscape.
— *Ulrich Odin collection. By courtesy of M. Odin.*
Photo, Laniepce

Conceived from this point of view, the human face falls into harmony with Sung landscape easily and naturally, for it obeys the same laws. Like landscape, it is freed from all realism and treated in an ideal spirit. And, like it, this portraiture was to be inspired by T'ang and Sung poetry, for the sage, the monk, or the peasant who dreams in the foreground of the landscape was, as it were, the incarnation of its psychological quality; or, rather, the person and the landscape appeared as two versions of the same idea, both being the ex-

pression of a common ideal, in human or inanimate form respectively. One and the same infinite reverie lives in the eyes of the sage and haunts the face of the earth; the lines of the horizon and the thoughts of the contemplative monk are rapt away beyond the clouds by one and the same ardour. The gnarled trunks of the ancient trees and the limbs or garments of the figure represented are contorted by the same animistic violence. Thus figures and landscapes alike are no more than a symbol, an invitation to spiritual soarings. Often, moreover, the figure in meditation, like the distance itself, is half swallowed up in the haze which steals over the foreground, so that the whole thing — people, mountains, and waters — becomes no more than the vision of a dream. Yet in contrast with this nebulous character the line itself has a clear-cut power and violence more highly charged with energy than any that has ever existed.

SUNG PAINTING

BEFORE WE DISCUSS THE SUNG MASTERS, A FEW WORDS SHOULD BE said about the paintings ascribed to T'ang masters, but obviously of Sung or Yüan workmanship. Thus the Kōtōin at Kyoto possesses two purely Sung landscapes, which it attributes to Wu Tao-tzŭ, one representing a cascade (Fig. 227), the other a torrent in a mountain gorge at the foot of some mountain peaks of a dizzy height, and having some trees with gnarled trunks in the foreground.[1] Among the Buddhist paintings ascribed to the same artist are pictures of Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī, and Samantabhadra in the collection at the Tōfukuji monastery, Kyoto, which may be reckoned among the most moving religious pictures of the Far East, and to which we shall return in the next volume of this work when treating of the formation of Japanese painting (Fig. 224–225).[2] There is also a cascade of

[1] *Masterpieces selected from the Fine Arts of the Far East*, Vol. VIII, "Chinese Paintings," Pl. 6–7.

[2] Ibid., Pl. 2–5.

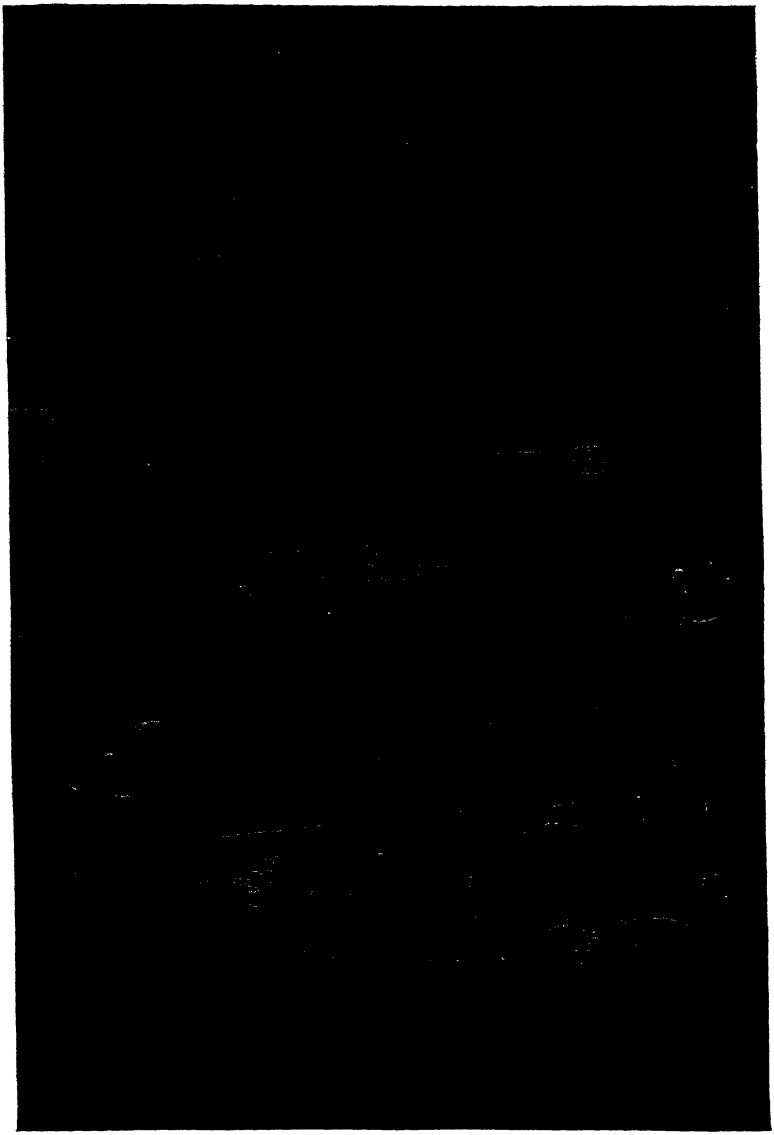


FIGURE 242

Halt of the Mongols. School of Chao Mēng-fu.
— *Henri Rivière collection. Photo, Laniepce*

prodigious power in the Shishokuin, Kyoto, which has been ascribed to Wang Wei (Fig. 226).[1] Nowadays critics all concur in attributing these masterpieces to the Sung school. The same is true of the two buffaloes being led back to their byre, a landscape now in the Eumorfopoulos collection, and formerly attributed to Han Huang; also of the equally fine ones attributed to Li T'ang.[2]

We shall also refer to the Sung period a painting in wash on silk in the Freer Gallery, Washington, formerly attributed to Ku K'ai-chih, illustrating an ancient poem on the nymphs of the river Lo.[3]

The chief Sung painters recorded by tradition are Fan K'uan, Tung Yüan, Kuo Hsi, Chao Ta-nien, Li Lung-mien, Mi Fei, and the emperor Hui-tsung for the K'ai-fêng-fu period (tenth and eleventh centuries); and Ma Yüan, Ma Lin, Hsia Kuei, Liang Ch'ieh (Liang K'ai), and Mu Ch'i (or Mu K'i) for the Hang-chou period (twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[4]

There seem to be no indubitably genuine paintings extant from the hand of Fan K'uan (990–1030); but we know from the Chinese biographers that he and Kuo Hsi painted forest-effects of forests among the mountains, impressions of snow, and vast spaces bathed in mist. In accordance with these indications a painting in wash in the form of a hand-screen in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has been attributed to Fan K'uan; it represents a winter landscape and, though it measures only about ten inches across, is full of a suggestion of "immensity," with its snow-covered heights, its bare, gnarled trees, and "that misty winter air in which the contours of the distant mountains are almost lost," to quote Sirén.[5] The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, also possesses another painting in wash, in the form of a fan, which has been attributed to Fan K'uan, though it is by a different hand from that described above. It is again a winter landscape, with

[1] Ibid., Pl. 8.
[2] *Eumorfopoulos Collection, Catalogue of Paintings*, Nos. 23 and 24, Pl. XVII–XVIII.
[3] Sirén: *Peintures chinoises dans les collections américaines*, 1st series, Pl. 1–2.
[4] See A. Waley: *Index of Chinese Artists*, 1922.
[5] *Peintures chinoises*, I, Pl. 12.

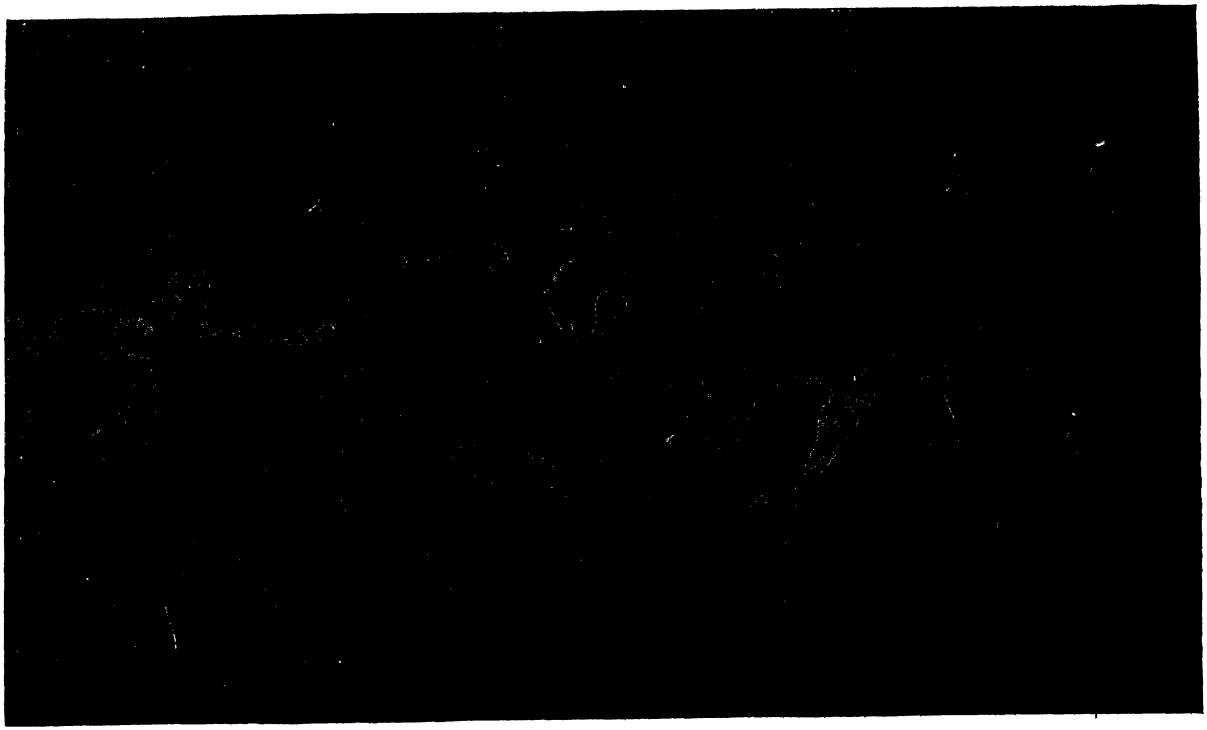


FIGURE 243

Group of Mongol horsemen. Detail of Figure 242.
— By courtesy of M. Henri Rivière. Photo, Laniepce

great strongly drawn trees, "whose bare trunks thrust their powerful roots in among snow-covered rocks"; a work "of remarkable boldness and grandeur,"[1] to whatever hand it may be ascribed.

To Tung Yüan, who lived at the end of the tenth century, the Boston Museum ascribes a roll, painted in delicate colours, entitled "a bright day in a valley,"[2] a vast, changing panorama of balanced composition: "We cross a broad river by a ferry-boat and follow the road which winds among the mountains on the promontory; finally a mountain path leads up to the temple which can be seen at the far end of a misty ravine. The peaceful grandeur of the landscape is rendered with remarkable strength and concentration. It is, so to speak, a symphonic composition, or, better, an epic description of mountains and rivers" (Sirén).

With the name of Kuo Hsi, who lived from about 1020 to 1090, is associated a roll in monochrome, about six feet eight and a half inches long, in the Freer Gallery, entitled "autumn in the valley of the Yellow River." Here again we have a vast panorama, with enormous mossy rocks standing up menhir-fashion, and those bare trees with their "crablike" tortuosities which are characteristic of one whole aspect of Sung painting.[3]

Chao Ta-nien, who flourished from about 1080 to 1100, may well have been responsible for an autumn landscape and another one of crows flying over a forest in winter, the former belonging to Mr. Akaboshi Tetsuma of Tokyo, and the latter to Mr. Hara Tomitaro of Yokohama.[4] In both of these we have rivers running through a forest, with picturesque coves and creeks, but neither shows any excess of technical skill. We may note the wheeling flight of the crows in winter above a landscape of waters and forest bathed in mist, with a leafless weeping willow standing alone on a river-bank. The Boston Museum also possesses an autumn landscape in wash and pale col-

[1] Ibid., Pl. 17.
[2] Ibid., Pl. 22.
[3] Ibid., I, 27–9.
[4] *Masterpieces*, VIII, Pl. 26, 27.

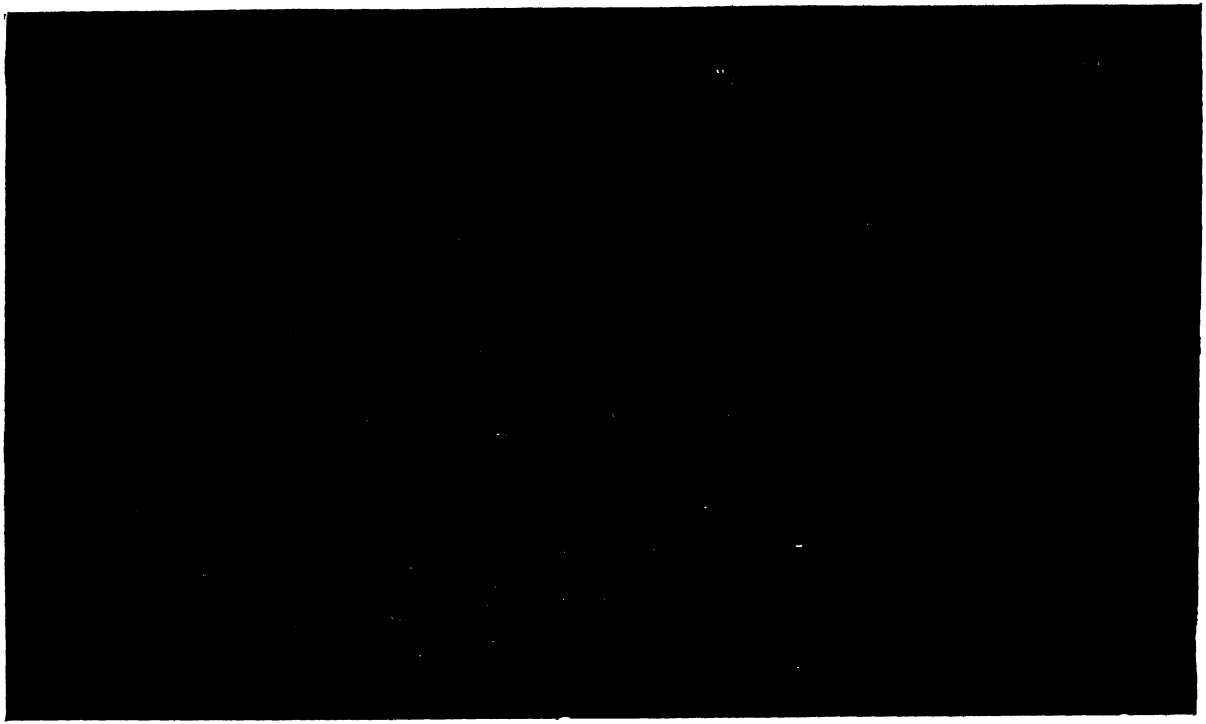


FIGURE 244

The runaway horse. Detail of Figure 242.
— By courtesy of M. Henri Rivière. Photo, Laniepce

ours on silk, in the form of a fan, painted in the manner of Chao Ta-nien, though with a tenderer and at the same time more superficial sensibility, in which a house, hidden beneath a screen of bare boughs, stands at the far end of a creek, at the foot of a hill whose summit is dimly indicated, the atmospheric values being subtly rendered.[1] Again, there is a landscape in the same manner in the Eumorfopoulos collection, with a group of willows near a winding, sluggish river, and peaceful mountains in the background.[2]

Li Lung-mien, or Li Kung-lin (1040–1106), is one of the most famous masters of Sung painting. He was a fervent Buddhist, " whose steady aim it was to isolate the spirit from the outward show, and who saw beyond the real to the immaterial essence which animates the world " (Petrucci). He soon gave up public life and retired to the heart of the mountains of Ngan-hui (An-hui), to paint the mystic visions which haunted his imagination. Among the works ascribed to him may be mentioned: the Buddhist saint (*upāsaka*) Vimalakirti visited by Ānanda, in the Marquis Kuroda Naganari's collection — a face with a spiritual quality worthy of Memling (Fig. 228) [3] — and some *arhats* (other Buddhist saints) of the same superhuman intellectuality in the Fine Arts School, Tokyo;[4] while the Freer Gallery, Washington, also possesses two rolls attributed to him. One of these represents " deities and fairies in an imaginary landscape," a vast dreamlike vision, with an unreal-looking palace standing among peaks so abrupt and fantastically visionary in outline that they might almost be taken for cloud structures, while the mannered elegance of a group of fir-trees puts a finishing touch to the foreground, and the river, winding between peaceful river-banks on which a weeping willow stands sentinel, has a tranquil and almost childlike delicacy.[5] There is another painting in the Freer Gallery, of a different style and

[1] Sirén: *Peintures chinoises*, I, Pl. 15.
[2] *Eumorfopoulos Collection, Catalogue of Paintings*, No. 25, Pl. XIX.
[3] *Masterpieces*, VIII, Pl. 25.
[4] Ibid., Pl. 23–4.
[5] Sirén: *Peintures chinoises*, Pl. 30–1.

perhaps from a different hand, representing a series of palaces and courtyards, which may be taken as typical of these " architectural

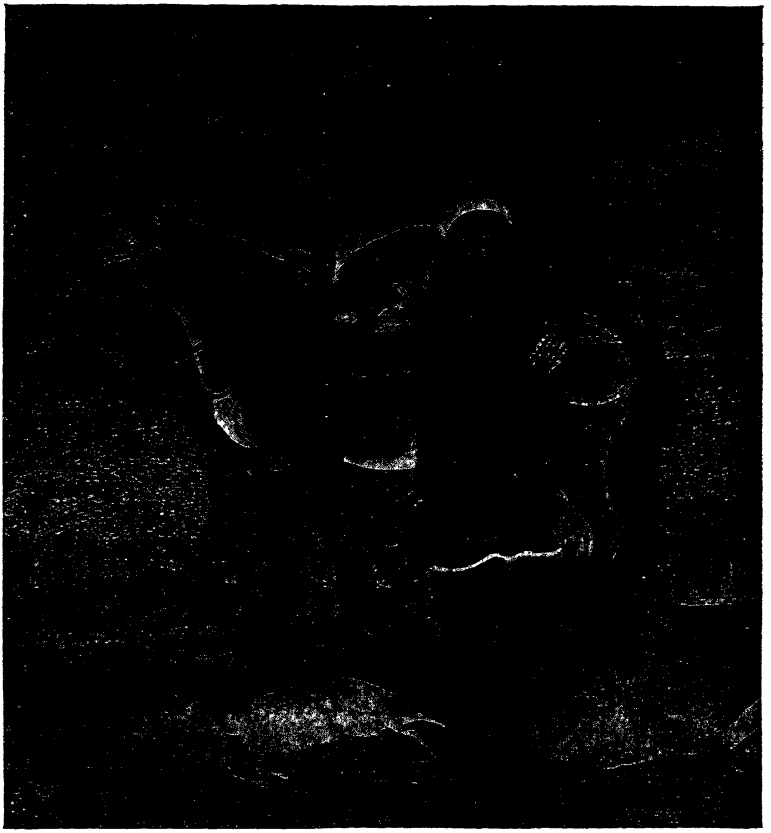


FIGURE 245

Mongol horseman tightening his saddle-girths. Detail of Figure 242.
— *By courtesy of M. Henri Rivière. Photo, Laniepce*

surveys " in painting, and in which the drawing of the pavilions, with their myriad columns, is treated with the subtle elegance of an early Italian background [1] — for Victor Goloubew has not unjustly

[1] Ibid., Pl. 32-3.

compared Li Lung-mien's line with that of Botticelli's drawings[1] (Fig. 229).

The Freer Gallery possesses a painting on silk attributed to Mi Fei (1051–1107) or his school, in which the landscape consists of a river flowing through a forest in the foreground, with a huddle of rounded mountain tops in the background, the whole engulfed in mists rising from the valleys which serve to separate the planes.[2]

The emperor Hui-tsung, who reigned from 1101 to 1125, was an ardent collector as well as a painter of fine taste. An æsthete and an archæologist, he collected in his palace at K'ai-fēng-fu a regular museum, in which, however, there seem to have been many things which were not genuine. A number of works are somewhat dubiously attributed to him, among which are the following: a powerful landscape representing a storm, in the collection in the Kuonji at Minobu, in the province of Kai, in which everything beyond the second plane is blotted out by the tempest, leaving nothing visible in the foreground but the writhing trunk of a pine-tree, at the foot of which is a traveller lashed by the whirlwind[3] (Fig. 230); also one of the most extensive compositions of the Sung school, now in the Konchi-in, Kyoto, and reproduced in my *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient*,[4] in which a poet, seated at the foot of a gnarled cedar, in a setting of mountains, is gazing out on an autumn landscape of distances and haze; and a picture from the same hand, again in the Konchi-in, with a standing figure gazing down into an abyss early in the morning of a winter day, amid a landscape of rocks, cascades, and steaming vapours.[5] In quite a different style is the roll in colour, about four feet eight and a half inches long, now in the Boston Museum, representing ladies engaged in preparing freshly woven silk.[6] This would seem, indeed, to be merely a copy of a T'ang original made by Hui-tsung, which would explain the still somewhat realistic character of this

[1] *Gazette des beaux-arts*, April 1914, p. 277.
[2] Sirén: *Peintures chinoises*, I, Pl. 26.
[3] *Masterpieces*, I, Pl. 28.
[4] Vol. I, Pl. XXII, p. 390.
[5] *Masterpieces*, I, Pl. 30.
[6] Sirén: *Peintures*, Pl. 5–8.

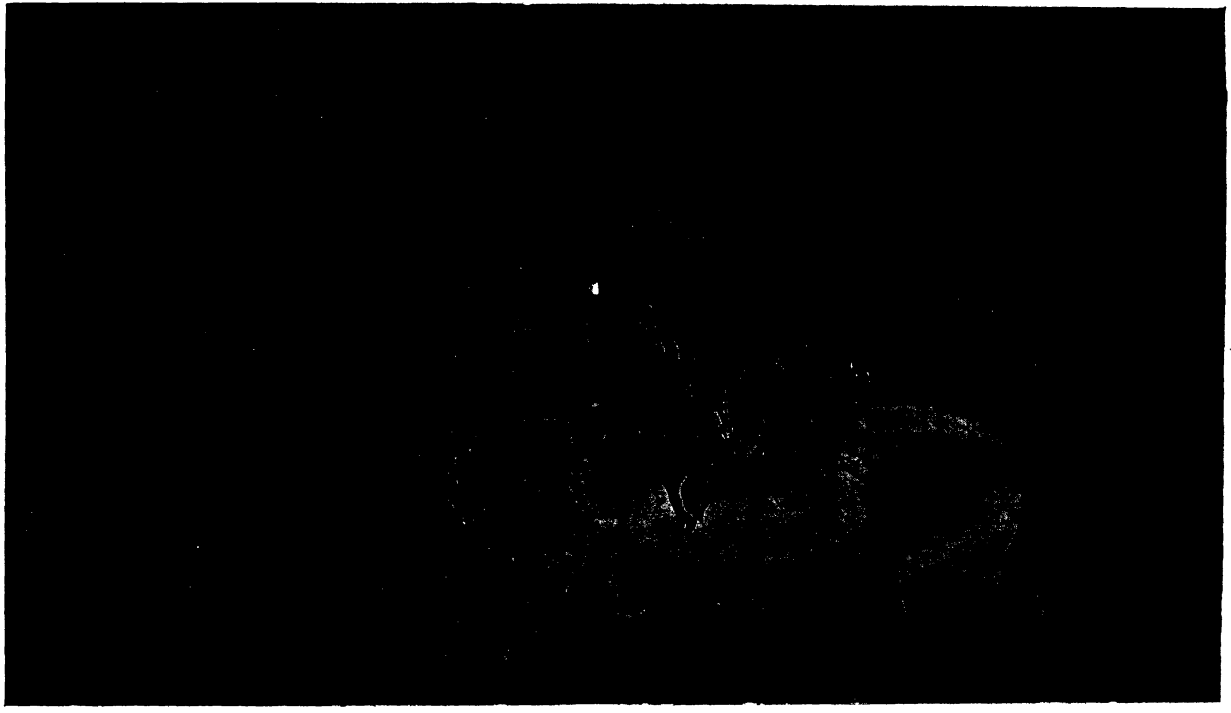


FIGURE 246

Mongol horseman.

— Henri Vever collection. By courtesy of M. Vever
— Photo, Laniepce

work, in spite of the elegant grouping of these women, suggesting "exotic butterflies and gorgeous flowers." [1]

After K'ai-fēng-fu, the emperor Hui-tsung's capital, had been taken by the Kin Tatars, in 1125, and he had himself been carried away captive to Manchuria, the seat of this school of painting was shifted to southern China, to Hang-chou, the new Sung capital.

Ma Yüan (1190–1224), one of the masters of the "Hang-chou school," was undoubtedly one of the greatest landscape-painters of the Far East. Later art-critics observed that he managed to combine the violence and majestic power of T'ang art with the reserve, mystery, and power of suggestion of the Sung style. His subjects and his manner inspired, not only later Chinese art, but also the Japanese school of Kano: country-houses in winter standing beneath pine-trees or bamboos, isolated groups of cedars or cypresses on some precipitous rock, impressions of November plains swallowed up in mist, or solitary trees bent by the wind in a bare country-side. Count Sakai Tadamichi's collection in Tokyo possesses a winter landscape attributed to him, in wash on silk, slightly heightened with colour, which is painted in this fashion [2] (Fig. 231); the solid construction of the planes, the sculptural power of the leafless tree which rises on the left, are, at any rate, typical of the style of Ma Yüan. There is also a rainy landscape of his in the Baron Iwasaki Koyata's collection: in the foreground is a boat moored to the shore, with rocks and great tall trees; then comes a layer of mist, and lastly, in the background, some blurred peaks.[3] In Count Tanaka Mitsuoki's collection there is a painting of a man and a child under a pine-tree; [4] in the Marquis Kuroda Naganari's collection is one of a poet watching the moon

[1] This realism, still in the T'ang spirit, may be compared with the more discreet elegance, which is already quite Ming, of the "court ladies at their embroidery" by Liu Sung-nien, of the Sung school of Hang-chou in the Kuroda Naganari collection. See *Masterpieces*, VIII, Pl. 54.

[2] Otto Kümmel: *L'Art de l'Extrême-Orient*, Pl. 80.

[3] *Masterpieces*, I, Pl. 42.

[4] Ibid., Pl. 43.



FIGURE 247
Watering the horses at the river.
— Musée Guimet

rising in the sky, from beneath a pine-tree which overhangs a mountain side, one of the purest "poetic soarings (*élévations poétiques*)" inspired by the Chinese artistic ideal.[1] In the Inouye Kaoru collection there is another, of a solitary fisherman watching his line from his boat on a lake in winter-time: the boat floats in the midst of the lake, with no visible shore, and nothing is to be seen but the unruffled water and the man intent upon his toil — the whole constituting one of the most poignant works produced by the painting of all time.[2] The paintings attributed to the same painter in the Boston Museum are far from possessing the character of those in the Japanese collections. Yet there is still great strength and breadth in one of these landscapes, with its very tapering, almost leafless weeping willows in the foreground, and mountains in the background, while in the middle is a sheet of water with a bridge, and on the opposite shore a hamlet.[3] There is also, in the Freer Gallery, a study of a hut which may be associated with the style of the Ma family, if not with that of Ma Yüan himself: "the sage's retreat in the mountain, beneath the pine-trees, at the torrent's edge"; but here the energy of Ma Yüan's brush degenerates almost into harshness in the commanding assertion of the personality of the pine-trees and in the sudden and almost phantom-like apparition of the mountains.[4]

Ma Lin, the son of Ma Yüan, inherited his father's vigour. There is a painting in the Musée Guimet which was formerly attributed to him and represents an assembly of mythical beings looking out over the sea — a romantic vision of an abode of dreams rising up amid precipitous rocks, with a high terrace commanding a misty scene of sea and reefs and of birds flying across it (Fig. 232). To Ma Lin has also

[1] Ibid., Pl. 44.
[2] Ibid., Pl. 45.
[3] Sirén: *Peintures chinoises*, Pl. 41.
[4] Ibid., Pl. 48. The "screen" in the Eumorfopoulos collection showing a meditative sage looking out through a gap into the country, from the shelter of a rock, on the side of which the zigzag tree-trunk so much beloved of this school juts out hazardously into space, is more in the usual manner of the Ma family (*Eumorfopoulos Collection, Chinese ... Paintings*, No. 18, Pl. XII).

been attributed the waterfall in the Okamoto collection, Tokyo, which is notable for the gnarled tree growing half-way up the mountain side on the very edge of the cascade, and for the little figure in the fore-

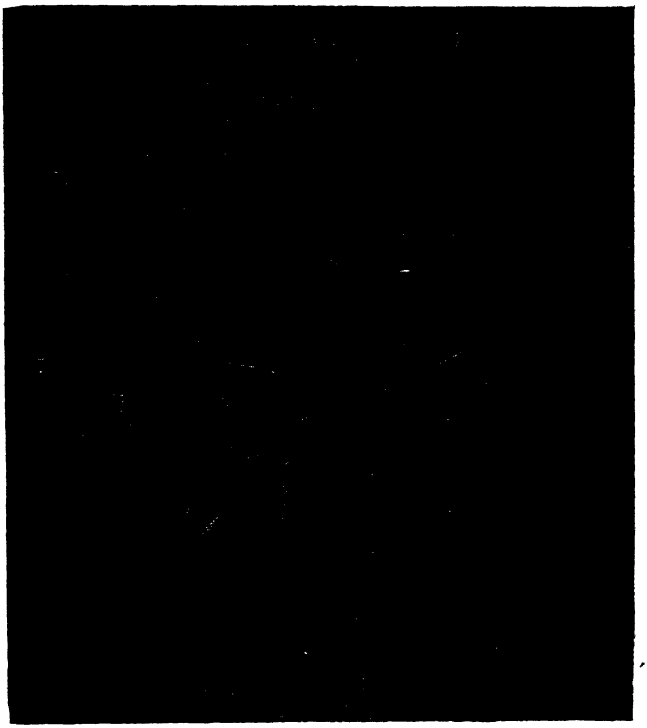


FIGURE 248
Tatar horseman.
— *H. Griggs collection. Photo, C. T. Loo*

ground sitting dreaming on a rock at its foot.[1] To Ma Lin is also attributed the fine summer landscape in the Inouye collection, Tokyo, representing a wooded river-bank surrounded by a vast stretch of water, with a boat almost invisible in the distance.[2] There was a sea-

[1] Grosse: *Le Lavis*, Pl. 17.

[2] Ibid., Pl. 16.

scape somewhat resembling this one in what used to be the Petrucci collection. There is a landscape in the Boston Museum in the manner of Ma Lin, with tall trees by the waterside, whose boles are cut across half-way up by trails of mist.[1] And, lastly, the Eumorfopoulos collection contains a perfect masterpiece — an evening impression all in brownish tones — attributed either to Ma Yüan, his elder brother Ma Kuei, or some other member of the Ma family: in the foreground is a river, on which drifts a boat containing a boatman and a poet sunk in contemplation; the evening mist renders it impossible to distinguish where the water ends and where the neighbouring mountain, which almost hides the sky, begins to rise from the shore; the shades are stealing over the mountain while the river still lies bathed in the afterglow of the sunset. It is an evening hour of silence and of dream (cf. Fig. 233).

Hsia Kuei, who flourished from about 1180 to 1234, was one of the official painters of the emperor Ning-tsung. Works attributed to him are fairly abundant in the Japanese collections. Chinese critics are fond of contrasting his delicacy with the harshness of Ma Yüan. And, indeed, in the romantic autumn storm among the mountains in the Kawasaki Shōzō collection, Kobe,[2] in spite of the violence of the blast which bends the storm-tossed trees and sends their leaves flying down into the torrent, the brush-work can be distinguished at a glance from that of the Ma family, in whose work the trunks of the trees, with their ragged protuberances, their soaring movement, or their broken zigzag line, seem to be almost carved in relief, so strongly does the accentuation of the drawing suggest a comparison with the use of a metal pen. Every pine-needle seems to be clearly distinguishable. On the other hand, in the very earliest works of Hsia Kuei, the tree-trunks, in spite of their bends, are drawn with a smooth, broad line, in which the width of the brush is given its full effect. For the foliage, instead of meticulously drawing the leaves, he uses the

[1] Sirén: *Peintures chinoises*, 3rd series, Pl. 87. [2] *Masterpieces*, Vol. VIII, Pl. 55.

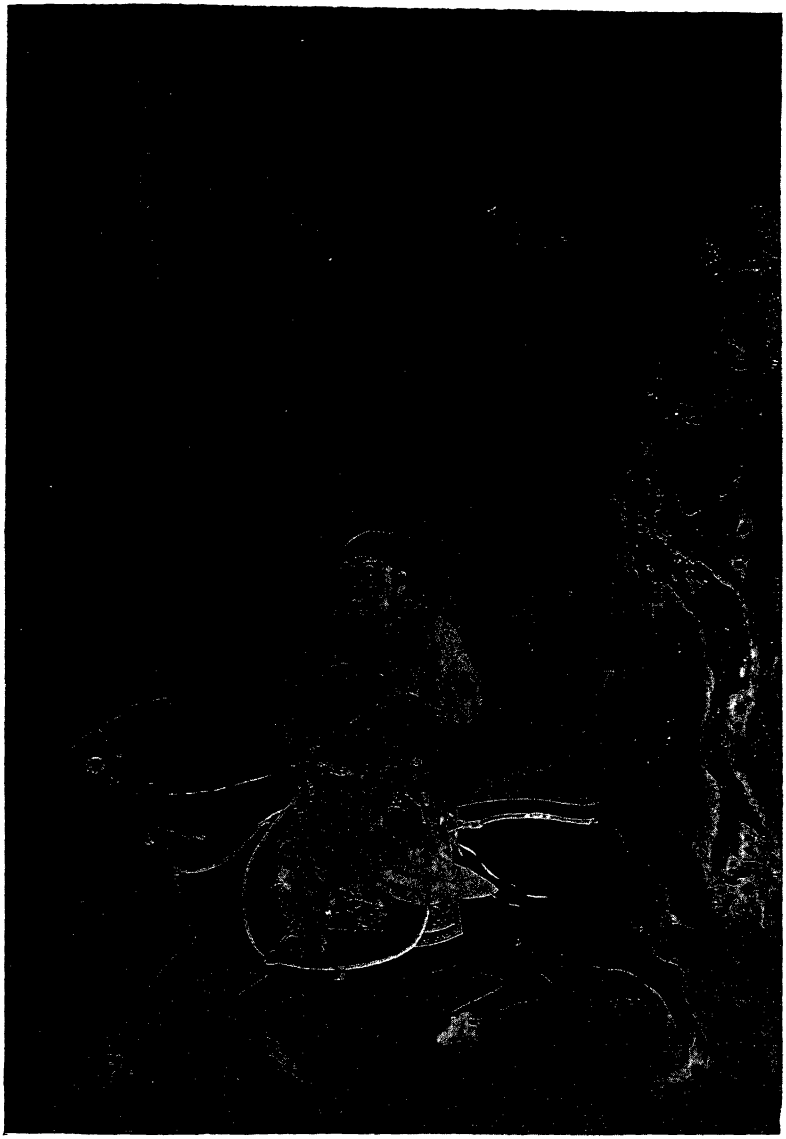


FIGURE 249

Tatar horseman.

— Langweil collection. By courtesy of Mme Langweil

process of floating diluted ink over the surface, adding the finishing touches with the brush. The same firm brush-stroke is used for the buildings, which have none of that care for minute accuracy of outline noted above in connexion with Li Lung-mien in particular, which suggested a comparison with the architectural compositions of the early Italian masters.

We here reproduce another work by Hsia Kuei which gives a good idea of his manner (Fig. 234) [1] — a sea-scape, showing a bay or river-mouth with a boat moored behind a projecting point of land. To the right are a few water-plants, and a few trees treated by the process of "floated ink with added brush-touches," as was the artist's wont; in the background is a glimpse of mountains on the horizon. The technical mastery is absolute. The expanse of water and the soaring line of the distant mountain chain produce an impression of breadth, the water and the light melting into each other, in contrast with the meticulous "pencilling" of the foreground.

This manner of treating the foliage of trees, by brush-drawing over a floated mass of ink, is still more marked in a landscape in the Kuroda Naganari collection, representing the retreat of a sage in the heart of a grove on a river-bank at the foot of a mountain.[2] Here the method of "pencilling" in the landscape with minute touches is definitely adopted, in contrast with the earlier style, which was characterized by a well-defined outline. This manner prevailed, not only in large and constructive compositions, but also in pictures depending for their effect on grace and charm, such, for instance, as a painting in the Akaboshi Tetsuma collection, Tokyo, representing the many windings of a river as seen by a spectator looking up-stream, with its clear, rippling waters washing down towards him, and in the foreground a traveller seated on a bank enjoying the airy freshness of the scene beneath the romantic bendings of a tree with a knotted

[1] From the collection of Baron Iwasaki Koyata, Tokyo; *Masterpieces*, VIII, Pl. 56.
[2] Ibid., Pl. 57.

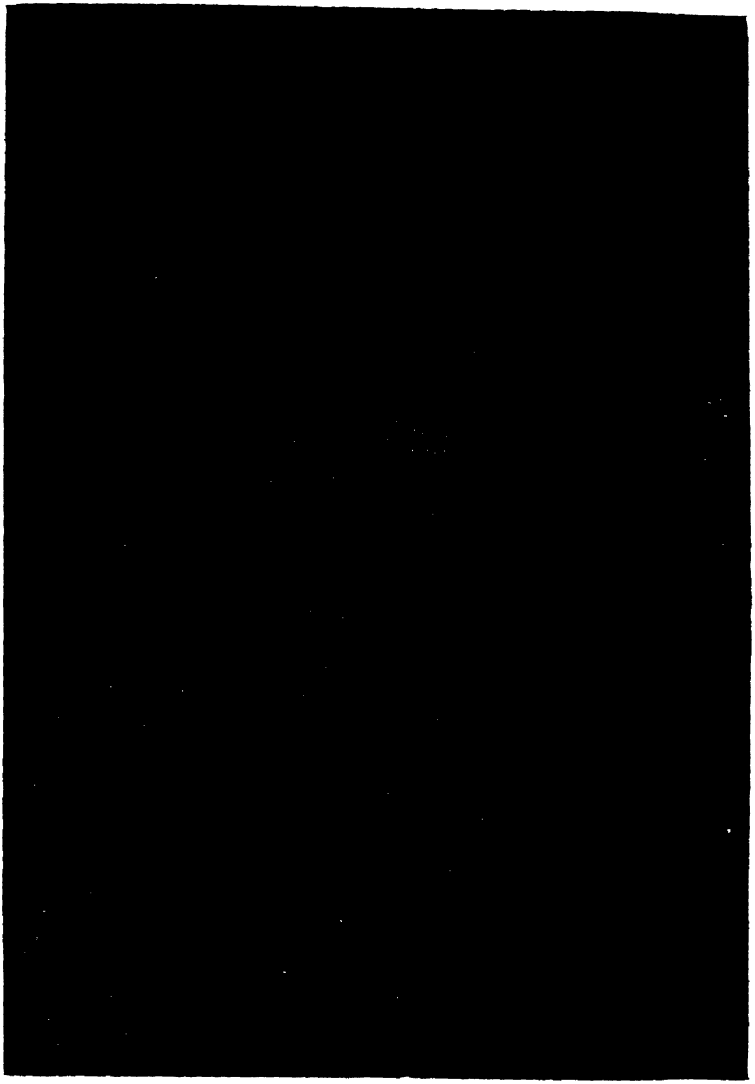


FIGURE 250

The hermit Han-shan, painting attributed to Yen Hui.
— *Kawasaki collection, Osaka. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

trunk.[1] The same impression of brightness is to be found in an immense sea-piece in the Gejō Masao collection, Tokyo,[2] in which we see stretched out before us, like a living panorama, a coast with its creeks, capes, and promontories, its fishing-villages sheltered among the trees, and boats moored here and there. In contrast with this work, which is made up of water and light, the landscapes in the collection of Count Mayeda Toshitomo have great romantic trees full of a distinct personality, pushing their way straight up towards the sky, full of effort and determination, in spite of all the resistance with which they have met, as is shown by their knotted, contorted, mis-shapen forms — trees which seem to stretch out their branches in gestures of appeal, effort, and victory, and dominate from on high, not only the tiny habitations of man, but the whole of the landscape.[3]

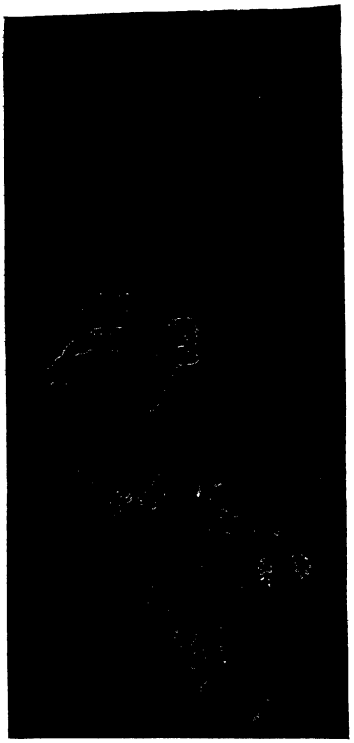


FIGURE 251
Portrait of a hermit, attributed to Yen Hui, in the Chionji, Kyoto. — *By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

The collections in the United States possess a number of paintings in this style, which are consequently attributed to Hsia Kuei. In the Boston Museum there is a painting on silk, "in the shape of a fan," with a river on which floats a boat, blurred mountain ridges in the background, and in the foreground the romantic wind-swept tree — Hsia Kuei's favourite type, reminding us of those of Verhaeren.[4] Even more romantic is a painting in the same

[1] Ibid., Pl. 59. [2] Ibid., Pl. 60. [3] Ibid., Pl. 62–4. [4] Sirén: *Peintures chinoises*, Pl. 14.

museum, a *kakemono* (or hanging picture) with these same trees in the foreground, beyond them the banks of a river, with fishermen's nets stretched out on them, and in the distance great craggy mountains.[1] The treatment of the foliage by brush-drawing over a mass of ink, the phantom-like aspect of the mountains, which are mere shadowy outlines, the whole arrangement of dark masses in which the aerial impression and sense of space suggested by the Sung paintings in wash are finally lost, rightly suggest to Professor Sirén that this work is an imitation, and a decadent one at that.

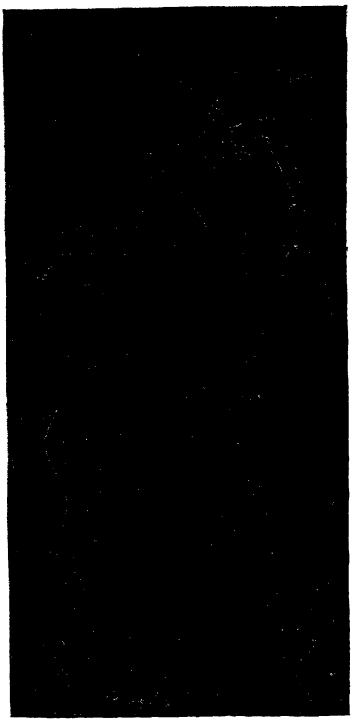


FIGURE 252
The Gana-sennin. Yüan or Ming painting.
— *Collection of M. Ulrich Odin. Photo, Laniepce*

Yet though Hsia Kuei can vie with Ma Yüan in power, while using totally different means, he is also capable of producing charming pictures on a small scale, as in a much reproduced winter landscape in the Shimitsu collection, Kyoto[2] (Fig. 234 b), which shows a few snow-covered huts huddled shiveringly together in the depths of a valley, at the edge of some vaguely indicated water, between two great leafless trees, whose bare twigs stand out in black against the white background. With its setting of mountains all covered in white, the impression made by the scene is one of homely intimacy.

A contemporary of Hsia Kuei was Liu Sung-nien, who flourished

[1] Ibid., Pl. 54.

[2] Grosse, op. cit., Pl. 10.

from about 1170 to 1230, and to whom are ascribed the fine landscapes in the Eumorfopoulos collection with mountain ridges scored and "wrinkled" with ravines in the style which characterizes this whole school.[1]

The school of Liang K'ai, which belonged to the first half of the thirteenth century, is well represented in Japanese collections. Part of these works consist of landscapes of water and snow, a little in the manner of Hsia Kuei, only rather simplified — as, for instance, in the snowy landscape in the Sakai Tadamichi collection,[2] of which we may almost say that it is made out of nothing: in the foreground is a rock overhanging the water, on which three bare tree-trunks seem to be lying prostrate. On the left is a snow-covered eminence, which is at once lost to sight. There are other snowy mountains almost invisible in the background, and the intervening space is wholly filled with mist. The same characteristics are to be found in the painting, in the Akaboshi Tetsuma collection, with two minute horsemen lost amid enormous mountains entirely covered in white.[3] At the same time Liang K'ai excelled in portraits of hermits or poets — for instance, those of Li T'ai-po, Han-shan, or the six Zen patriarchs — treated with great strokes of the brush, in a synthetic and humorous manner which was to find imitators in all the later Chino-Japanese schools of painting, down to Hokusai. When he combines this realistic vein, almost verging on caricature, with a sense of landscape, we have amazing works, such as the figure, in the Magashi Kyōhei collection, Tokyo, seated under the branch of a pine-tree and looking out into a vague immensity.[4] Liang K'ai's masterpiece in this *genre* is a standing figure of Śākyamuni in the guise of an ascetic, leaning upon his stick, meditating, close beside a torrent in a strange landscape of precipitous mountains, belonging to the collection of Count Sakai Tadamichi,[5] and reproduced in my *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient*.[6]

[1] *Eumorfopoulos Collection, Paintings*, p. 27, Pl. XX.
[2] *Masterpieces*, Vol. IX, Pl. 73.
[3] Ibid., Pl. 74.
[4] Ibid., Pl. 69.
[5] Ibid., Pl. 70.
[6] Vol. I, Pl. XXIV, p. 396.

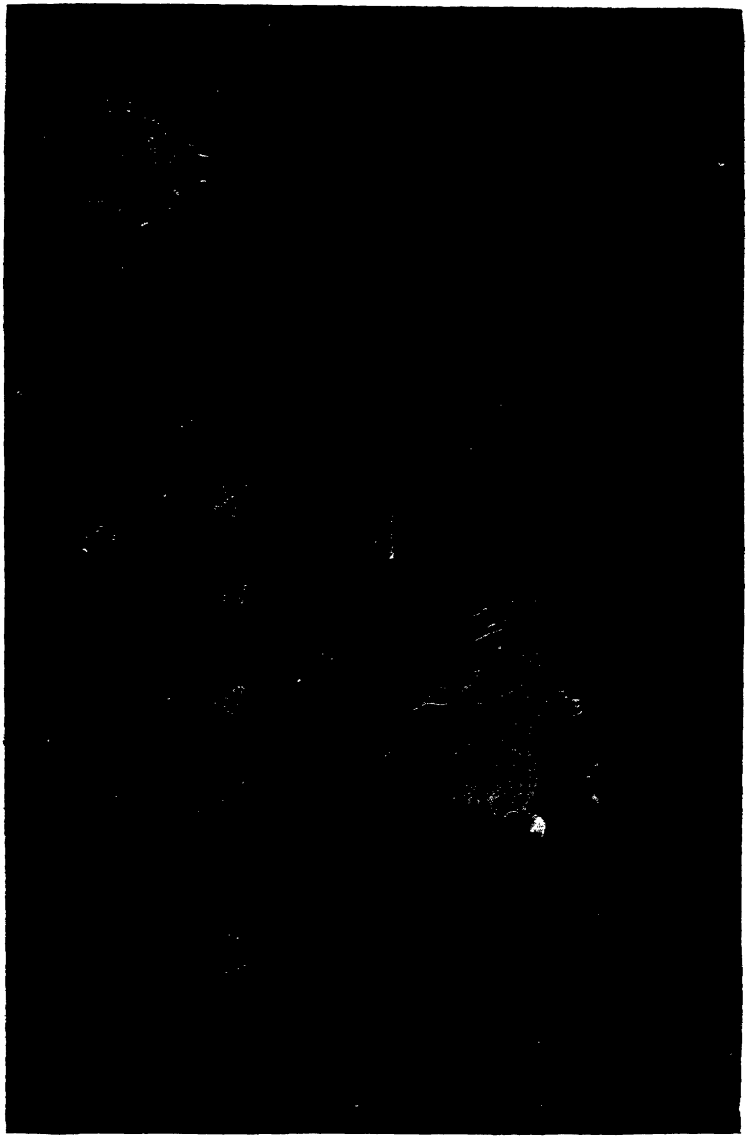


FIGURE 253

"Ecstasy." Painting in the Yüan style.
— *Musée Guimet. Presented by Professor Sirén*

The intensity of thought, and, if such an expression be permissible, the violence of the meditation, are rendered with a sort of harsh yet spiritual quality in this hairy, almost savage face. It is this inward violence, quite as much as the wind which blows up the mountain gorge, that stirs the strange folds of the meagre garment and finds a counterpart in the gnarled branches, like monstrous beasts, which writhe in contortions before the ascetic's feet.

The last of the great Sung artists was Mu Ch'i (or Mu K'i), who must have been painting about 1250, and to whom we are beholden for some superhuman visions in the sphere of fabulous animals and divinities. We already feel a certain harshness in the picture of a branch in the Daitokuji, Kyoto, in spite of the monkey perched upon it, whose presence only serves to transport us all the more surely to the tree-tops of the forest, high above the landscape which we can at once imagine.[1] With the dragon and the tiger in the same temple we have the manner of Mu Ch'i in its fully developed form. The dragon is a precious reminder of past ages; for at the beginning of this study we saw how the mystery and terror expressed in the face of the *t'ao-t'ieh* incessantly haunted the Chinese imagination. At the end of a long process of evolution, when the art of China had mastered a subtle technique, we once more find this enigmatic and disturbing face in the work of the most romantic of Chinese painters. Its presence could already be divined in the depths of a landscape; but now we see it appearing to us in the mingled light and shadow of a storm-cloud, with its terrifying face, its long tentacles, like those of a sea-beast, its demon's horns, and its blazing eyes, whose glance has the ghastly glare of lightning. In this physiognomy is suddenly concentrated the whole vague menace of the unknowable, at once bestial and divine, thus revealing the continuity of the Chinese soul from the Chóu age to the Sung.[2] In the same way the strength and power with which the tiger in the Daitokuji rears itself up is superhuman in its

[1] *Masterpieces*, IX, Pl. 85. [2] Ibid., Pl. 90.

quality; for this fierce attitude and the beauty with which it is treated only serve to concentrate more attention upon the face, on which the terror of the ancient mythologies is suddenly revealed once more.[1]

But not only has Mu Ch'i exalted the most ancient beliefs of the race, dating from pre-Confucian ages; but it is to him, too, that we owe the loftiest pictures of Chinese Buddhism on the eve of the Mongol conquest, as though the ancient Chinese culture, before disappearing, had desired its whole soul to be expressed by one of its most profound geniuses. Thus in the *arhat* Vanavāsi in the Iwasaki Koyata collection, the fierce and almost savage power expressed in Mu Ch'i's dragon and tiger was placed at the service of Mahāyāna spirituality. This picture [2] is indeed an unforgettable vision of the ascetic sunk in exalted contemplation, seated upon the coiled-up body of the divine serpent, overlooking a marvellous and romantic scene of mists and precipices. The face of the saint, at once fierce and ecstatic, at once terrible and lit up with an infinite gentleness, has a grandeur worthy of Michelangelo.

And when Mu Ch'i's tumultuous soul at last finds peace in Buddhism, we have the Kuan-yin (goddess of mercy) in the Daitokuji, a white, majestic vision, with a meditative expression at once gentle and grave, seated, apparently, at the mouth of a rocky cavern, with a torrent at her feet and vaporous mists rising about her (Fig. 235).[3]

And lastly, just as the spiritual impulse of the Sung philosophers had passed beyond Taoism and Buddhism and become concentrated at last in the powerful nature-philosophy of Chu Hsi and Ju-kiao, so we find expressed in the paintings of Mu Ch'i the same reaching out to embrace the whole of nature, conceived as the very soul of things. I know no more metaphysical or transcendental landscape in the whole of Sung painting than that in the possession of Count

[1] Ibid., Pl. 91.
[2] Reproduced in my *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient*, I, Pl. XXV, p. 398.
[3] *Masterpieces*, IX, Pl. 84.

Matsudaira Naosukē, representing the return of the junks to a fishing-village on Lake Tung-t'ing.[1] The boats can hardly be distinguished at all, for the whole landscape is made up of water, misty atmosphere, space, and distance; even the village itself huddles indistinctly among a clump of trees in a corner of the roll, as though man and his works were here absorbed into the vastness of space. On the eve of perishing, the soul of China had embraced the whole universe.

To complete what we have to say about the Sung period, it remains to speak of the ceramics, which certainly conform to the same canons of art as the whole period in general, for in the porcelain, too, we shall find the same intellectualization of art as distinguishes the Sung age. For what, after all, is a fine piece of celadon ware, or a moonlight scene, but matter spiritualized? [2]

Yet the passion for ceramics marks a change in the faculties of the Chinese soul. Sung painting was still an expression of Chinese energy, the prodigious creative energy of ancient days, which, at the very moment when it was believed to be dead, found in this process of intellectualization an unexpected means of renewing its vigour. It is a different matter with ceramics. It is true that, as we have just said, this branch of art shares in the general intellectualization of all values; but when expressed in terms of ceramics, this intellectualization assumes a sensuous form. The pleasure is still intellectual, no doubt, but it denotes a respite in the hard struggle of earlier days, a tendency to dilettantism and play. A Sung vase, with its mouth recalling the lips of a woman, its soft flanks, and the exquisite curve of its cheek, is more carnal in its suggestion than all the *yakshiṇī* of tropical India, because the sensuousness is more refined. This cult of the sensuous indicates that the great China which had been so inex-

[1] Ibid., Pl. 94; reproduced in my *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient*, I, Pl. XXVI, p. 400.

[2] See Hobson and Hetherington: *The Art of the Chinese Potter, from the Han Dynasty to the End of the Ming*, Pl. 32–104; Hobson: *Catalogue of the Eumorfopoulos Collection, Ceramic*, Vol. III.

haustibly prolific for twenty centuries past was weary of production. And so, if we are to judge Sung ceramics without injustice, they will be most fittingly discussed as a preface to the history of China in the Ming and Ch'ing periods, which were to bear but little relation to previous ages. This discussion will be found in the next chapter.

On the other hand, Yüan painting will be dealt with here, for its history completes that of Sung painting.

THE YÜAN ÆSTHETIC IDEAL

DURING THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY CHINA WAS CONQUERED BY THE Mongols under Jenghiz-Khan and his successors. In 1211 the Mongols set out to subdue the Kin kingdom of northern China, completing its conquest in 1234. Similarly, between 1234 and 1279 they methodically carried out the conquest of the Sung State of southern China. From 1279 to 1351 they remained masters of the Chinese Empire, which they had thus unified. While their emperor Kublai (1259–94), as grand khan of the Mongols, claimed suzerainty over the territories in central Asia, Persia, and Russia conquered by the house of Jenghiz-Khan, his sole ambition in China itself was to found a new imperial house which should inherit the traditions of the old national dynasties. The house which he founded was the Yüan dynasty, which lasted from 1279 to 1369.

Hence under the Yüan dynasty the aim of art was to carry on the Sung tradition in every respect. There are some landscapes, treated in the manner of Ma Yüan or Hsia Kuei, which may be classed indiscriminately as Sung or Yüan. Yet the Mongol conquest, like all the great upheavals in Chinese history, could not but leave its mark in the sphere of art. It is impossible for a whole people to be swept away by such a whirlwind as the age of Jenghiz-Khan without any trace of this being left in its works; and, as a matter of fact, the Mongol period

was to bring back for a time to China the realistic art of the heroic T'ang age, with its animal and military subjects.

This return to realism was embodied, so far as painting is concerned, in the Chao school, founded by Chao Mēng-fu (1254–1322).

Chao Mēng-fu was well fitted to personify such a complex age as this. Though a prince of the Sung family, he had rallied to the Mongol régime in 1286, and soon became the favourite artist of Kublai and his successor, Timur. We accordingly find in his school a fusion of two tendencies: the feeling for landscape, which is still treated in the Sung manner (Fig. 240, 241), and the realism of the Mongol age in the treatment of animals and military scenes (Fig. 242–249).

As always happens in such circumstances, the renaissance of realistic animal-painting — that "neo-T'ang" style which was characteristic of Yüan art — profited by what had been gained during the intervening period, and hence by all the skill in drawing of the Ma school. Thanks to this twofold inspiration, the horses of the Chao Mēng-fu school are admirable in their vigour, strength, and movement. The same realism is to be found in the portraits of horsemen, for the Chao school were not only powerful animal-painters, but wonderful historical artists. Shaking off the impressionist reveries of the Hang-chou school, these descendants of the Sung emperors knew how to observe the extraordinary events which were convulsing the world. Contemporaries of Kublai and Timur-Khan, they cause all the heroes of the Tatar conquest to live again before our eyes — the Mongols of the Gobi region, the Chinese of the north, on to whose stock was grafted that of the Kin or K'i-tan stock, the Turks of Kashgaria, the Tangut of Si-hsia, each with his own racial type and national costume, some riding the little Tatar pony of Mongolia, others the great horses of Transoxiana. It is impossible to imagine more accurate ethnographical and historical documents than these representations of the Mongol cavalry which conquered the world. No

texts can do so much to enlighten us about this great age as the scenes from the roll in the Henri Rivière collection which we reproduce here — of horsemen during a halt, of a rider tightening his saddle-girths, or of a horseman pursuing his escaping horse with a lasso (Fig. 242–245).

Works of the school of Chao Mēng-fu or in his manner are now fairly numerous in European collections, whether they are from the hand of the master himself, his son Chao Yung, or his pupils or mere imitations of a somewhat later date. The Musée Guimet possesses a little picture in this manner of four horses turned out to grass, one of which is rolling in the grass in an attitude showing close observation (cf. Fig. 247); there used to be one in the Petrucci collection of some horses grazing, and another of a horseman washing his horse's legs;[1] there was also one in the Doucet collection of a Tatar horseman returning from the hunt on a Manchurian pony;[2] and another in the Bushell collection of a Tangut hunter carrying back a deer which he had slain.[3] The A. Kahn collection contains an escaping horse pursued by his rider with a lasso, which is almost a replica of one of the groups on the Rivière roll.[4] The manner of Chao Mēng-fu is also represented in the Boston Museum by two riders beside a tree,[5] and in the Freer Gallery by eight horses, one of them with a rider,[6] besides a restive horse being held by a Mongol,[7] and others.

The same genius in animal-painting is to be seen in a number of paintings in colour in the Eumorfopoulos collection, such as that of the horses being fed, with grooms, attributed to Jen Jen-fa, the

[1] Petrucci: "*Tchao Mong-fou*," *Revue de l'art ancien et moderne*, September 1913, pp. 173, 184.
[2] Chavannes and Petrucci: *La Peinture chinoise au Musée Cernuschi*, Pl. XXI.
[3] Bushell: *Chinese Art*, Vol. II, Fig. 128.
[4] Petrucci, loc. cit., p. 175.
[5] Sirén: *Peintures chinoises*, Pt. 4, Pl. 124.
[6] Ibid., Pt. 4, Pl. 126–7.
[7] Ibid., Pt. 3, Pl. 120.

"horse being led by the bridle" attributed to Chao Mēng-fu, and the horsemen turning to inspect a tree, attributed to Ts'ien Hsüan, or Ch'ien Hsüan.[1]

The Mongol dynasty was distinguished not only for its warlike character, but also for its Buddhist piety and the favour which it showed to the bonzes, and under its sway religious painting was in great honour. One of the favourite artists at the Yüan court was Yen Hui (fourteenth century), who painted hermits and *arhats* in which we find a mystic fervour almost equal to that of Mu Ch'i, with an added touch of sly psychological discrimination. Among the works attributed to him we may mention the hermit Han-shan and the laughing hermit Shih-te, full of monkish humour, in the Kawasaki Shōzō collection, Kobe (Fig. 250);[2] the hermits Ha-ma (Gama) and Li T'ieh-huai (Tekkai) in the Chionji, Kyoto, one of whom is puffing from between his lips a little genie, accompanying his action by a most expressive gesture of his open hand, and a glance most impressive in its power; the other hermit is seated on the outskirts of a wood, holding some flowers in his hand, while his tame toad sits on his shoulder stroking his hair[3] (Fig. 251; cf. also Fig. 252); and, lastly, in the Count Tanaka Mitsuaki's collection there is another hermit standing, with his garments blown by the wind, and his hands crossed



FIGURE 254
Chinese fresco.
— *British Museum, formerly in the Eumorfopoulos collection. By courtesy of Mr. George Eumorfopoulos*

[1] *Eumorfopoulos Collection, Paintings*, Nos. 30, 31, 65.
[2] *Masterpieces*, IX, Pl. 118–19.
[3] Ibid., Pl. 114–17.

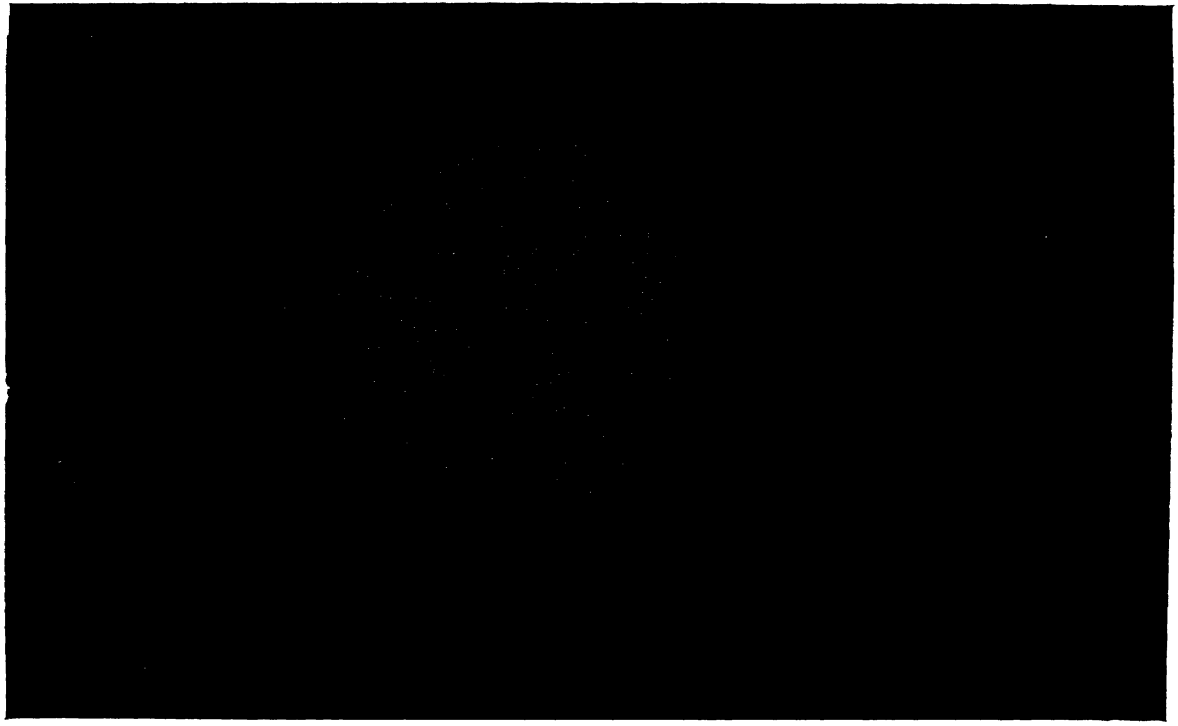


FIGURE 255
Head of a priest.
— *Henri Rivière collection. By courtesy of M. Henri Rivière*

in an attitude of fervent expectation, with his eyes almost starting out of his head, and a look of terrible intensity accompanying his exercise of mental concentration.[1] Though rather faded, the Dhyanist monk in the Boston Museum, represented as engaged in meditation, is likewise remarkably powerful and fiery in its execution.[2] There is also a fine painting in brilliant colours presented to the Musée Guimet by M. Oswald Sirén, and belonging to the same school, which represents an ascetic rapt in ecstasy among the clouds, where he is entering into communion with the dragon (Fig. 253).

This Buddhist revival, which characterizes the Yüan period as well as the revival of realism, inspired several sets of frescoes, some from Ch'ing-liang-ssŭ, to the north of Chēng-ting in Chih-li, others said to be from Yüeh-shan-tung in Shan-si, and others no doubt from neighbouring sites, most of which have passed into Mr. George Eumorfopoulos's collection (Fig. 254),[3] and a few fragments acquired by M. Robert Gérard. These frescoes were originally ascribed to the T'ang period; but, as has been established by Professor Pelliot, by comparison with the frescoes of Tun-huang,[4] none of these works can be earlier than the fifteenth century — in our opinion, that is, they are paintings of a Yüan character lingering on for a while into the early Ming period. But the original misconception is none the less suggestive. It is excellent evidence of the T'ang renaissance which characterized the Mongol age in China in religious painting on a large scale, as we have seen above that it did in realistic animal-painting.

The very fine, typically Ming frescoes in the Billy and Cosme collections are of a somewhat different character, with less that recalls mediæval models, but with a more intimate quality and feminine grace in their nobly ordered composition.

[1] Ibid., Pl. 120.

[2] Sirén: *Peintures Chinoises*, Pt. 3, Pl. 117.

[3] *The George Eumorfopoulos Collection, Catalogue of the Chinese Frescoes*, by Laurence Binyon (London, 1927).

[4] Pelliot: "*Les Fresques de Touen-houang et les fresques de M. Eumorfopoulos*," *Revue des arts asiatiques*, Vth year, No. IV.

CHAPTER IV

The Period of Dilettantism and Academic Art

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MING PERIOD

In 1351 SOUTHERN CHINA BEGAN TO REVOLT AGAINST MONGOL domination. By 1388 the Mongols had been driven out of Pekin, and the native dynasty of the Mings, who had been leaders in the movement of national liberation, now ascended the imperial throne, which they were to occupy till 1644.

After the upheaval represented by the Mongol conquest the Ming period therefore appears as a general restoration of native standards — a restoration all the more systematic because the Mongol conquest had been so complete: for, though in the course of her long history China had quite frequently been invaded and partly conquered by Tatar hordes, the Mongols under Jenghiz-Khan and his successors had been the first to bring her entirely under their domination; moreover, by attaching her to a world-empire extending over three-quarters of Asia and eastern Europe, they had deliberately made her accessible to every foreign influence. The history of Rashīd al-Dīn and the stories of Marco Polo or Odoric of Pordenone throw a flood of light upon this cosmopolitan China at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, governed by an itiner-

ant and most heterogeneous collection of Turkish, Persian, Tibetan, Italian, or Armenian adventurers and thrown open to all languages and religions.[1] In 1342 the Mongol Emperor might have been seen receiving a papal legate in great pomp at Pekin. The Ming restoration set up a barrier against these cosmopolitan influences. Under the founder of the dynasty, the emperor Hung-wu (1368–98), China once more closed her frontiers. The Catholic missions were destroyed, and the Tibetan monks fell out of favour at court.

The new dynasty returned to the traditions of the Sung and other native dynasties throughout all its domains. This reaction went beyond the sphere of culture; for politically, too, China became a closed country. Though Hung-wu and, above all, the next Emperor but one, Yung-lo (1403–24), claimed for their house the pan-Asiatic suzerainty which had belonged to the grand khans of the house of Jenghiz-Khan, the later Ming emperors had no ambition save to defend the northern frontier against the Turkish, Mongol, and Tungusian tribes, for the adventure of Jenghiz-Khan and his house still haunted the imagination of all the nomad races. As early as 1449–50 the Oirad Mongols almost gained possession of Pekin, and in 1550 some other Mongols, the Ordos Tumed, set fire to the outlying parts of the city; so it may almost be said that the Tatar menace did not cease till 1644, when Pekin was taken in a surprise attack by the Manchus.

This constant menace explains the timidity of Ming policy, and also the character of Chinese culture under the new dynasty, both policy and culture having restoration as their guiding idea. Out of a superstitious reverence for the things and ideas of past days, men confined themselves to imitating Sung works (Fig. 256). It was an age of academic and erudite art. In painting, the Chinese genius still produced charming landscapes, and portraits possessing psychologi-

[1] See L. Binyon: *Painting in the Far East*, Chapter x, "The Mongol Empire: Painting in Tibet and Persia" (p. 146).

cal penetration, while in ceramics it produced numbers of exquisite works; but it none the less remains true that the great creative period was over. A timid conservatism and an exclusive seeking after the pretty — both signs of fatigue — now proclaimed the fact that the old fierce, tumultuous China had been definitively succeeded by the China of painted screens and dainty trifles.

Possibly the deep-lying cause of this transformation should be sought in the exhaustion caused by the turmoil of the Mongol age. Perhaps the energies of China never succeeded in recovering from the disaster caused by the invasion of the Mongol hordes. Still suffering from the effects of that terrible shock, the soul of China turned in upon itself and its past; for the reason why China had lost confidence in herself was that, as we can now see, she had exhausted the mighty creative faculty and power of indefinitely renewing her youth which had never failed her for twenty centuries.

Does this mean that the Ming period is negligible? By no means; and to attempt to ignore it, devoting all one's attention to the Han, T'ang, and Sung periods, would be to make the same mistake as those who underrate the merits of the "classical" age of France on the pretext that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were infinitely more creative.

A fine Ming painting — and there are a great number of them in existence — will always be of more value for an exact understanding of Chinese art than all the pseudo-T'ang and pseudo-Sung works that crowd our collections. Moreover, it is often singularly difficult to draw the line between the Sung subject and its Ming treatment. There is far more continuity between the two ages than is generally supposed (cf. Fig. 256 and 260).

Moreover, Ming painting maintains a most honourable level, which would be quite sufficient to shed renown upon the dynasty, were we not acquainted with the great works of the Sung period. It is

characterized by an elegance which is no doubt rather conventional, and a grace which is sometimes a little slight and cold — though often, too, very touching, and redeemed by a perfect mastery of technique (cf. Fig. 260, 261). Obviously, as we have already pointed out, we shall no longer find in the figures the same fire, movement, and sureness of touch as in previous ages; while in landscape direct observation of nature will make way for academic compositions governed by the precepts of an erudite and literary convention, but, again, by no means lacking in charm. As in the Italy and France of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the picturesque was now reduced to a convention; and our first impulse at the present day is certainly to unmask the somewhat artificial character of such methods. On reflection, however, we need only enter, even though slightly, into the intentions of the artist to take pleasure in the literary allusions, the intentional melancholy of the subjects, and the conventional sentiment — in fact, in all that element which reminds one of the pictures on a screen, which rest the mind by their very repetition.

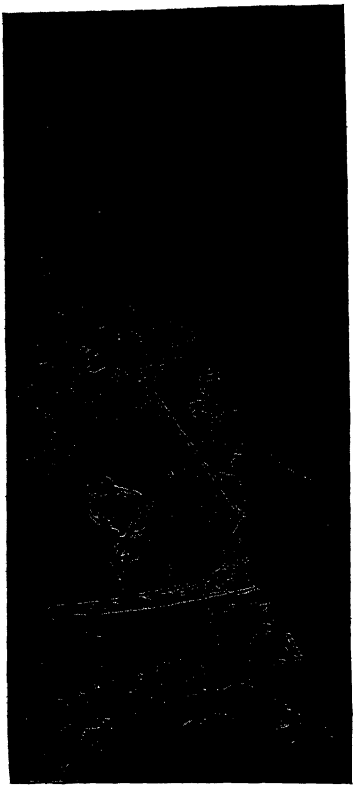


FIGURE 256
Fisherman, by Chēng-lu.
— *Yenari collection, Tokyo. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

Among the artists of this period we may mention Lin Liang, who painted flowers, fruit, and birds; the landscape-painter Shēn Ch'i-nan

or Shēn Chou (Sheh-t'ien) (1427–1509); Wēn Chēng-ming (1470–1559), a painter and a poet, who seems to have imitated the landscapes of the school of Chao Mēng-fu; his contemporary T'ang Yin (1470–1523), who painted portraits of women; Ch'iu Ying (Shih-

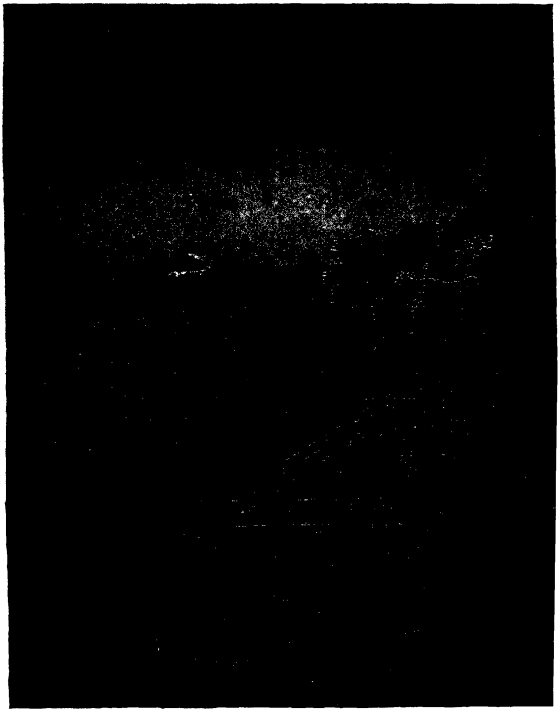


FIGURE 257

On the terrace. Sung painting.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

chou), who imitated the Sung landscape-painters; Ch'ēn Shun and Chou Chih-mien, who painted birds, insects, and flowers, etc. Ch'iu Ying, in particular, has left us a spring scene in the Imperial Palace,[1] a large composition in which the mild, amiable society of the Chinese

[1] Reproduced in Bushell: *Chinese Art*, Vol. II, Fig. 131.

renaissance lives again in a charming setting — a vision, evoked by some Watteau of the Far East, of a court whose refinements we can only compare to those of the last days of the Trianons. The background is a fantastic landscape such as those one sees on screens,

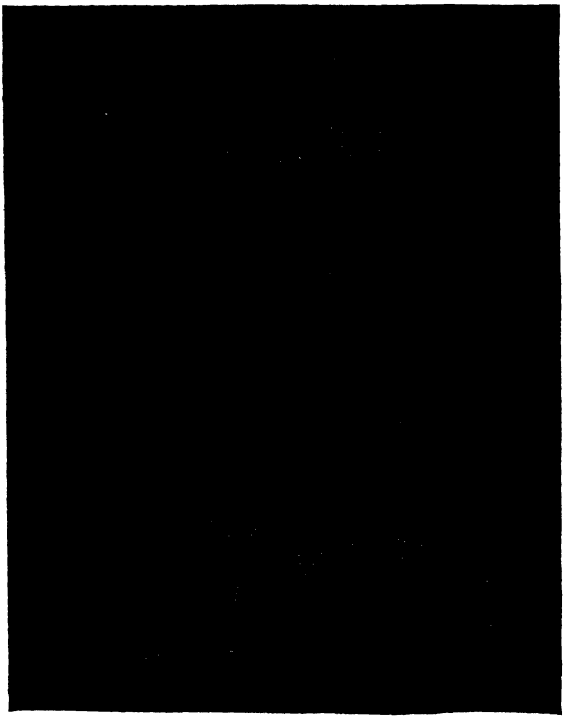


FIGURE 258
Sea-scape, style of Hsia Kuei.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Laniepce*

with pavilions, kiosks, gardens, and flowering shrubs. In this enchanted setting move legendary figures of female musicians and dancers, attendants and great ladies in brocaded court robes, with flowers in their hair, indulging in various aristocratic pastimes with dainty, mannered gestures which shed grace upon all around. Some

are plucking flowers and arranging them in vases, others are reading, painting, or playing at chess. The Empress, surrounded by her ladies-in-waiting, is sitting to a painter for her portrait, while one young woman stands like a dreaming vision on a veranda, gazing out into

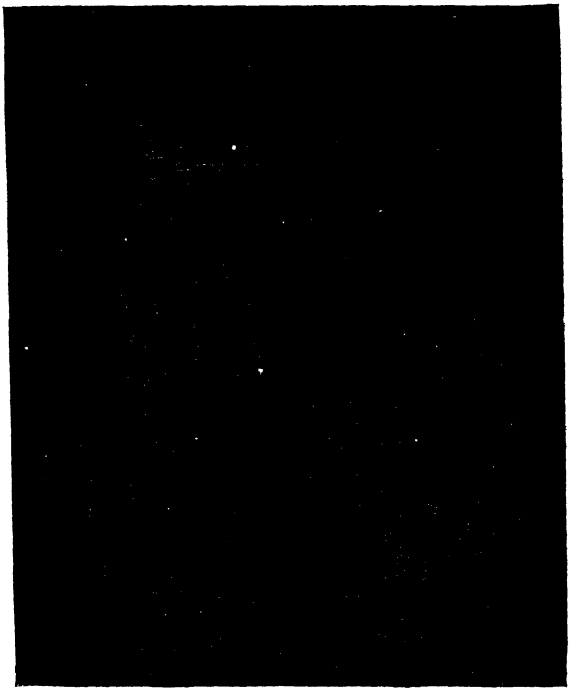


FIGURE 259
Landscape, late Sung or Yüan.
— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

the distance at a lake fringed with weeping willows. The courts of the Italian princes of the *quattrocento*, which were contemporary with this masterpiece, seem almost coarse beside the society of which it affords us a glimpse.

The British Museum contains a great composition of the Ming period in a similar style, representing the " Visit of the Immortals

to the Emperor of the Upper World," which is absolutely fairy-like in its beauty.[1] Against a background of burnished gold, with a subdued brilliance, the Immortals, clad in delicately coloured robes and with their hands full of flowers, roam along the banks of a delightful lake, or drink tea with smiling and amused faces, on a rustic bark guided by a young boat-woman with elegant, sweeping movements. The mystic, naïve, dreamlike quality of this picture, like that of the paradises of Fra Angelico, is enhanced by an aristocratic grace like that of a later age, as illustrated in Watteau's famous picture "Embarking for Cythera."

But the Ming masters not only painted pleasing landscapes, as well as faultless paintings of flowers and birds; they have also left us a whole series of portraits distinguished by their sober elegance, the delicacy of their drawing, the finely wrought precision of their faces, and the keenness of their expression. The Vignier and Langweil collections and the Musée Guimet (Sirén donation) possess a number of genuine specimens. We reproduce here a portrait from the Vignier collection worthy of the school of Holbein (Fig. 264), and two portraits from the Langweil collection, one of which, with the face of an old eagle and a meditative eye, reminds us a little of the Descartes of Frans Hals (Fig. 265), while the other, with its worn, wrinkled face and expression of cunning meditation, in which the piercing glance of the cold eyes points to centuries of administrative punctiliousness and inward scepticism, is a revelation of the character of the whole mandarin class (Fig. 266). The Louvre possesses an excellent portrait in the same style, though much later, of an aged Chinese lady in a pink robe, sitting in her state attire, with a cold, wary face, on which experience of life's inevitable lessons has left an expression of dignity and strong will.

But it cannot be denied that it was only accidentally the aim of

[1] See Fenollosa: *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, II, 58 and illustrations. Cf. the very fine "Genii and Immortals" in the Bouasse-Lebel collection, illustrated in Chavannes's and Petrucci's *Peinture chinoise au Musée Cernuschi*, Pl. XXXVII.

the Ming portrait-painters to express the power of thought or material strength. All the qualities implied in the West by the terms "mysticism," "romanticism," "impressionism," or "realism," which had been the great sources of inspiration of the mediæval schools, are hardly to be found in their work, except in academic copies. Except, perhaps, in their funeral portraits, their sphere is always that of conventional grace and prettiness. In this sphere, to which we have constantly to return in discussing them, they pro-



FIGURE 260
Ming landscape.
— *Vignier collection*

duced perfect masterpieces. We need only mention two rolls which display an exquisite art. One of these, the portrait of the female magician Ma Ku by Cheng Hung-chou, brought back by the Pelliot mission to the Louvre, which shows a young woman carrying a blue vase in her right hand, and bearing on her left arm a basket full of flowers, is a fresh, pleasing vision with its flying scarfs and streamers, and dates from the first half of the seventeenth century;[1] the other, in the Vever collection, which Monsieur Vever is so very kind as to allow us to reproduce here (Fig. 262), represents a young woman sitting under a tree. Neither the Italian art of the *quattrocento* nor

[1] Migeon: *Musée du Louvre, Chinese Art*, Pl. 113 (published by Morancé).

the French art of the eighteenth century have created feminine silhouettes of a more touching, delicate, and unsubstantial grace. None but a society of a refined but rather debilitated and fragile elegance could have created these frail dream-figures, little Chinese princesses of four hundred years ago, whose dreams and life will remain for

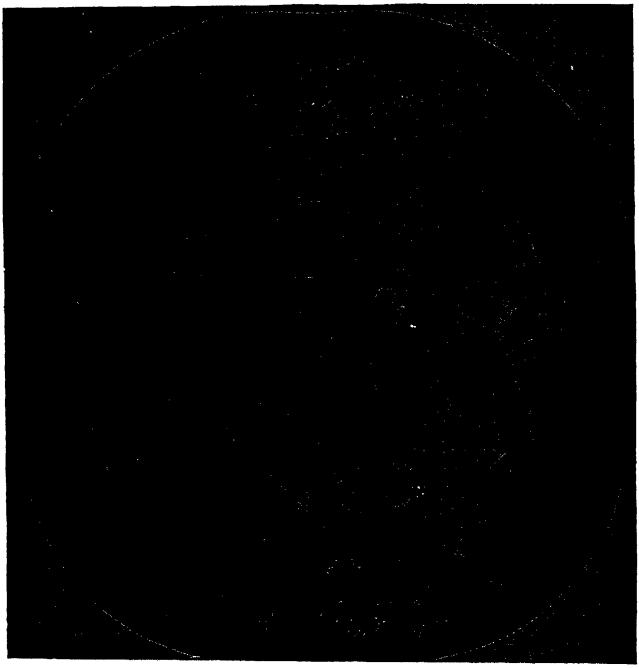


FIGURE 261
Women at their embroidery-frame.
— *Kuroda Naganari collection. By courtesy of the* Shimbi Shōin

ever unknown to us, but who shed their fragrance upon a very exclusive court, and in whom we are surprised to find figures such as those who people our own dreams — for to a French eye they are almost like ladies drawn by Clouet and disguised in the Watteau style (Fig. 257, 260, 261, 262, 263).

To complete our characterization of the Ming period, we may add that, in default of original schools, it saw the development of art-criticism. It was now that the famous encyclopædia of Chinese art appeared, known as the *Chieh tzŭ yüan hua chuan,* or *The Precepts of Painting the Garden the Size of a Grain of Mustard Seed,* which has been translated into French by Raphael Petrucci. The original nucleus of the work was due to Li Ch'eng-heng, or Li Liu-fang, a man of letters and landscape-painter, who lived between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The work was continued by the writer and critic Li Yu, who wrote a preface to it, by his son-in-law Shēn Sin-yu, their friend the landscape-painter Wang An-tsie (Wang Ngan-tsie), and the latter's two brothers, about the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. As we have said above, we find in it a codification of all the precepts of the erudite theorists upon art, showing the artist how to produce the picturesque and the natural by a clever imitation of the Sung masters.

In our opinion, there is more strength and originality in the Ming bronzes. When they first began to enter the European collections, they were admired for a time, but since then they seem to have been the object of a most unmerited indifference. As a matter of fact, it cannot but be admitted that a number of the bronzes presented by Monsieur Migeon to the Louvre, or forming part of his own collection, possess either a spare, nervous elegance [1] or a smiling subtlety [2] which place them among the best productions of Chinese art. We know no more senseless prejudice than that which would prevent us from admiring a work, however fine one may feel it to be, simply because it does not belong to a great age.

[1] Notably the powerful mounted Kuan-ti, about a foot high, with its sure and balanced design, in the Louvre, Migeon donation. Cf. Migeon: *Musée du Louvre, Chinese Art,* Pl. 43, Fig. 86.

[2] For instance the delightful seventeenth-century standing statuette of a young woman, nearly a foot high, in gilt bronze, with a fluttering scarf on her shoulders, in the Migeon donation, Louvre. Ibid., Pl. 45, Fig. 90.

But the great art which flourished under the Ming dynasty was neither painting nor sculpture, but ceramics.[1]

This rise in reputation of an art unjustly known as a "minor" one — an art, too, which in China was destined to absorb all the others and fuse them into one — had already begun under the Sung dynasty. And in this sphere, too, as indicated above, the Sung period marks the great historic transformation in the Chinese æsthetic ideal.

Till then, in fact, this ideal had been dominated by internal sources of energy, by forces stored up for centuries past in the subconscious soul of the race and arising out of its most ancient sociological or mythological notions. But under the Sung dynasty all these deep-lying potentialities had found concrete expression, and in so doing had evanesced; freed, then, from these age-old exigencies, the artist for the first time aspired towards "art for art's sake," and in this direction found two paths open to him: the intellectualist, which found its medium of expression in Sung painting; and the sensuous, which found it in Sung and Ming ceramics.

The latter form of art stands for the sensuous cult of a beautiful substance, loved for its own sake. As a matter of fact, in China this cult, too, went back beyond the very origins of the ceramic art, to remotest antiquity. As early as the archaic period, jade, the "intrinsically beautiful" stone, had been in request among the Chinese for ritual purposes, as being the noble substance *par excellence*. To handle the jades in any great collection, such as the Gieseler collection, will explain better than any theory how carefully and deliberately the block of jade was chosen for its special purpose — whether in connexion with offerings to the divinity, or the magic preservation of a dead body, or for use as a stopper in the rites of burial — and with what loving patience the lovely, almost living mineral was separated from baser materials, polished, and refined like a beautiful body prepared for the caress. Most of these pieces reveal their reli-

[1] See Hobson: *Catalogue of the Eumorfopoulos Collection, Porcelain*, Vol. IV.

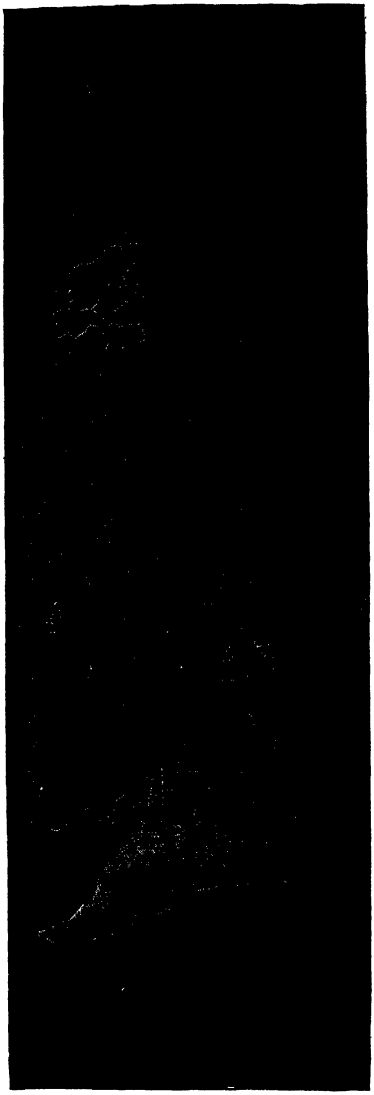


FIGURE 262

Ming lady.

— *Vever collection. Photo, Laniepce*

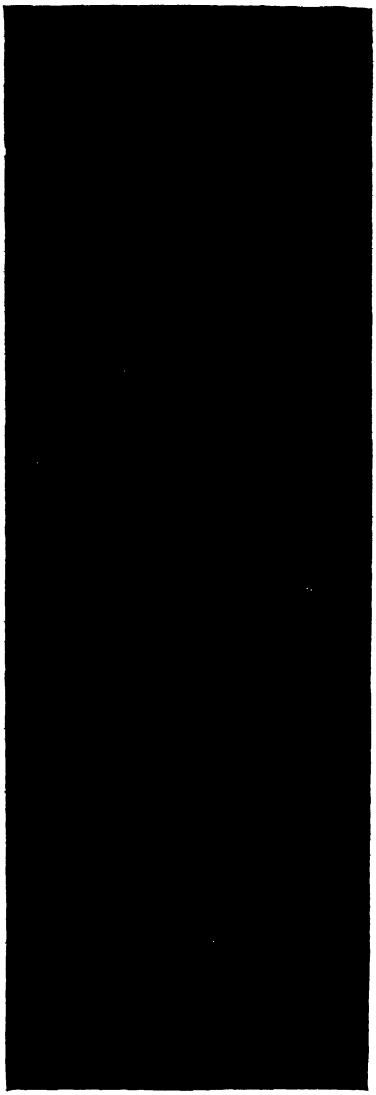


FIGURE 263

Ming lady.

— *Vignier collection. Photo, Vignier*

gious purpose at a glance. In handling them one immediately feels, as it were, invested with some dignity, impregnated with strength and nobility, with a purity both physical and religious, just as the contemplation of a fine Attic Zeus predisposes one to noble attitudes and moral serenity. But gradually the ritual purpose is forgotten, and nothing is left but the smooth, chill substance of the jade, as delicately veined and tinted as flesh, and with tones of infinite variety and softness, contact with which imparts a sensation almost spiritual in its sensuousness.

This spiritualization of matter prevailed in Sung ceramics too; indeed, fine Sung porcelain is governed by the same æsthetic preoccupations, at once spiritual and sensuous, as the jades of the archaic period and has the same subtle simplicity. There are a number of monochrome pieces, often devoid of all ornament, whose sole merit, as with the jades, lies in their form, colour, and softness to the touch. This is notably true of most of the pieces from Ting-chou, in Chih-li, in which the white body was covered with a glaze which was also white, while they varied from a slightly translucent porcelain to an opaque stone-ware. It is also true of the celadon ware of Lung-ch'üan, in Cheh-kiang, with its grey-green glaze, which is so plentifully represented in European collections; [1] or of the pottery of Chün-chou, in Ho-nan, with its opaline glaze, now dove-grey, now lavender, now "crushed strawberry," now a mottled crimson, blue, plum-colour, red, or *aubergine*-purple, pieces which as a rule admitted of no decoration but the great splashes of colour which sometimes break the uniformity of the glaze; and, lastly, it was true of the "hare's fur" (*t'u-mao* or *temmoku*) ware of Chien-yang, in Fu-kien. In most of these pieces, as in the jades of the archaic period, the material in itself possesses artistic merit, being all purity, nobility, and softness.

[1] It may be remarked that the celadon ware of the Sung dynasty was exported to the whole of the Moslem East and as far afield as Egypt. See Fritz Fitchner: "*Chinesische Sung-Seladone in Ägypten, und ihre Nachbildungen in Fustät*," in *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, New Series, 6th year, Pt. 2, 1930.

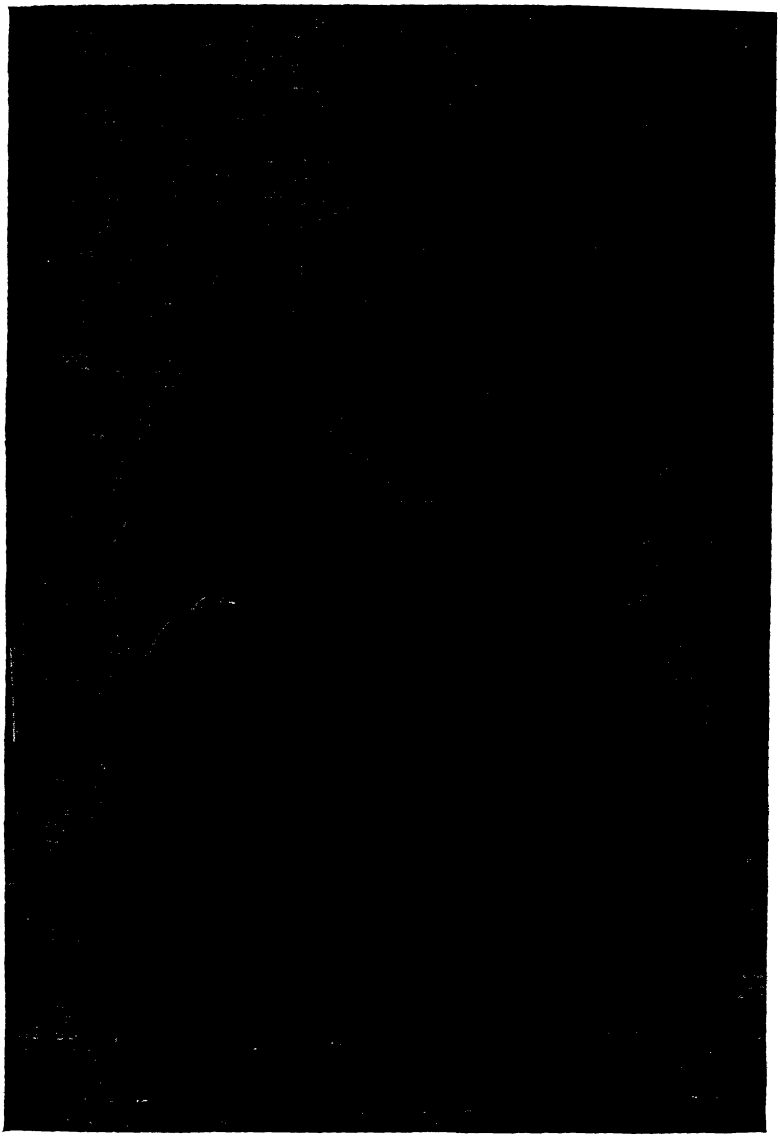


FIGURE 264
Ming portrait.
— *Vignier collection*

At the same time, as in the jades, this material is a caress to the sight and to the touch alike, the impression being heightened by the elegance of the lines. As M. Charles Vignier has pointed out, T'ang potteries are pottery and nothing more, whereas, on the other hand, a Sung vase is like living flesh, with the curves of a woman's body: the arch of the foot, the softness of the hips, the fullness of the breast, and, after the neck, whether slender or short, the lips, offered as though for a kiss.

Under the Ming dynasty this pure philosophic sensuousness lost its ideal character, and, in our opinion, ceramics came down to earth — necessarily so indeed, for henceforward it was to become the one great synthetic and universal art. In obedience to the general taste for the pretty, it was to minister to the distraction of the eye rather than to the delight of the spirit. Whereas Sung ceramics had been characterized by an elegant sobriety of form, ornament, and colour, that of the Ming age affected forms which were extraordinarily rich and varied. Variety of form was, indeed, all the more sought after because by that time ceramic ware was used for a greater variety of objects of every size and for every purpose, from inkstands, brush-holders, and sweetmeat-boxes to garden seats, statues for temples, and roof-tiles. As for the decoration, its style was almost entirely changed.[1] The pieces with a monochrome glaze, which had been almost exclusively in vogue under the Sung dynasty, became far less numerous. The only monochrome style in fashion was in white, with ornaments sometimes moulded, incised, or carved, sometimes painted in white on white under the glaze, especially during the Yung-lo period (1403–24). These pieces were made for the most part at Tē-hua in Fu-kien.

Polychrome pieces formed by far the greater part of the output of King-tē-chēn, in Kiang-si, the celebrated imperial manufactory of the Ming emperors. They included pieces with many-coloured glazes, as well as those with painted decoration.

[1] Cf. Hobson: *The Wares of the Ming Dynasty* (1923).

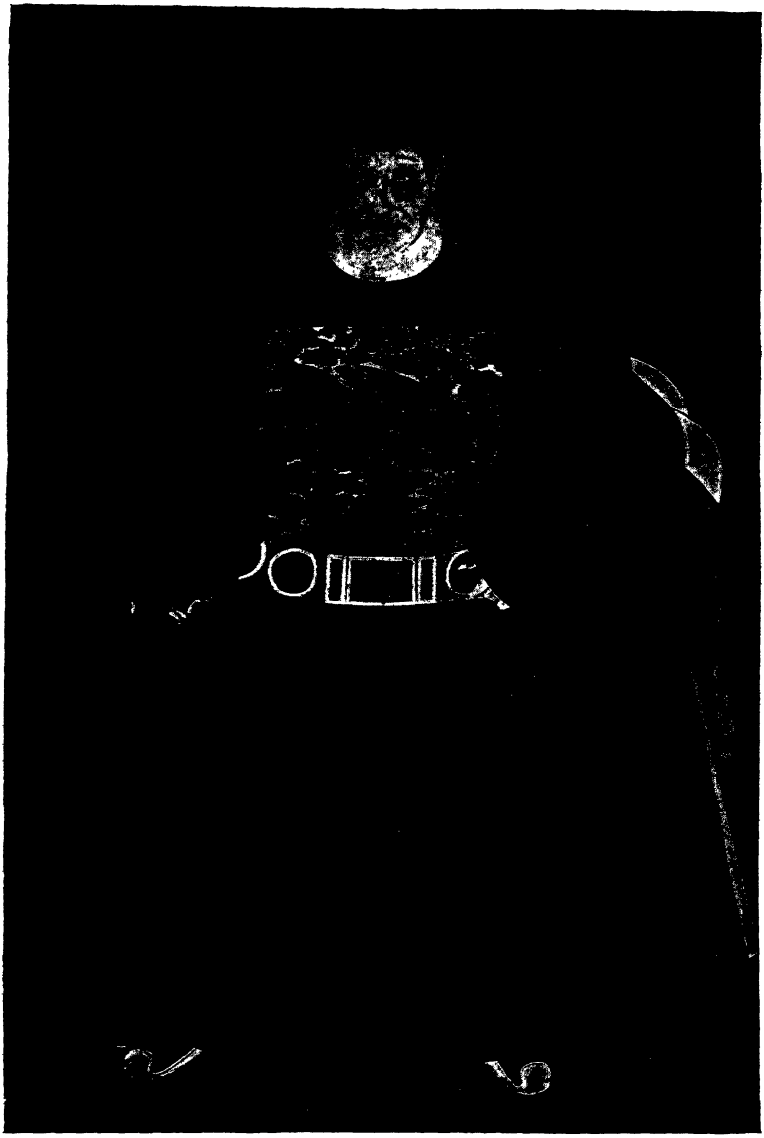


FIGURE 265

Ming portrait.

— *Mme Langweil's collection*

The pieces with many-coloured glazes are decorated with enamels in different tones fired at a moderate temperature, the body itself having previously been fired at a high temperature. These enamels are often outlined by a narrow raised edge enclosing the coloured glaze — in a fashion recalling *cloisonné* enamels. The tones most frequently employed are *aubergine*-purple, green, yellow, turquoise, and a deep violet-blue. This process of decoration was in use chiefly from the Hsüan-tē period onwards (1426–35).

The ceramics with painted decoration included, in the first place, pieces with a decoration of blue on white, the quality of which varies with that of the blue. In the sixteenth century, during the Chēng-tē (1506–21) and Chia-ching (Kia-tsing) (1522–66) periods, we see the triumph of the blue known as *hui-ch'ing*, or "Mussulman blue," which had its origin in Persia, though always mingled in varying proportions with the native blue. This mixture produced a complete range of shades, from the deep, intense blues to the dull, greyish shades.

As early as the Hsüan-tē period there appeared, side by side with pieces painted in blue on white, those with painted decoration in various colours. These can be classed in two great categories: those in three colours (*san-ts'ai*) and those in five colours (*wu-ts'ai*). The former of these, which flourished especially during the Ch'eng-hua (1467–87) and Hung-chih (1488–1505) periods, included pieces painted in an under-glaze green, yellow, and *aubergine*-purple, to which three colours turquoise-blue was added in the Chia-ching period (1522–66). The "five-colour" class, which also made its appearance during the Chia-ching period, and reached its highest development during the Wan-li period (1573–1620), includes all polychrome pieces, painted in overglaze enamels and having the design outlined by a red or blue-black line. In these we see the appearance of those tones of red — coral-red and iron-red — which were to assume such importance under the Ch'ing (Ts'ing) emperors. This abandonment of blue and white for a polychrome decoration

with a note of red marks the great change in Chinese taste from the Wan-li period onward.

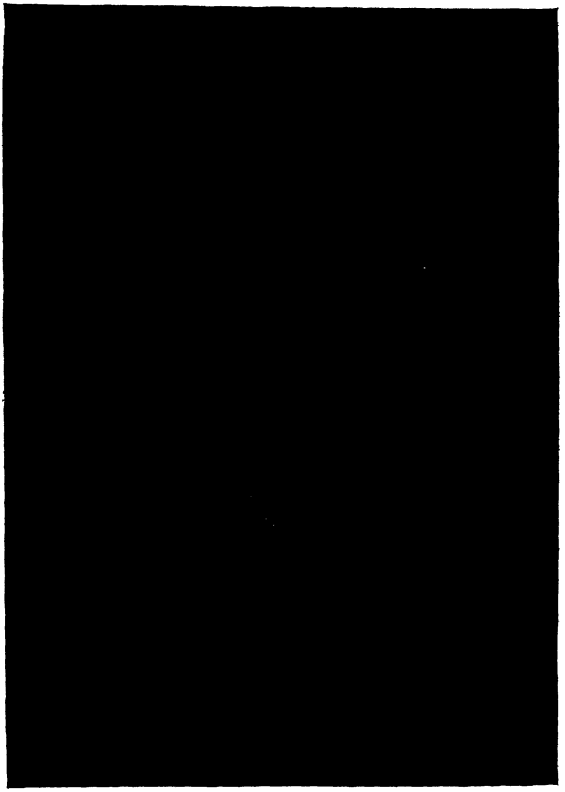


FIGURE 266
Ming portrait.
— *Mme Langweil's collection*

THE CH'ING (TS'ING) PERIOD

IN 1644 CHINA WAS SURPRISED AND CONQUERED BY THE MANCHUS; but the ambition of this people, even more than of the Mongols in the thirteenth century, was simply to carry on the traditions of the

native dynasties. Hence their dynasty — that of the Ch'ing emperors — remained faithful to the Ming tradition. Two of the Manchu emperors of the eighteenth century, K'ang-hsi (1661–1722) and Ch'ien-lung (1736–96), may even be reckoned among the greatest sovereigns in the annals of China; for they conquered Mongolia, eastern Turkestan, and Tibet and thus restored the historic frontiers of the empire.

We shall therefore not be surprised to see in the art of the Ch'ing period a continuation of the styles of that of the Ming age. On the one hand the decadence of sculpture and painting became even more marked; and, on the other hand, the ceramic art reached its absolutely culminating point.[1]

The K'ang-hsi porcelains without painted decoration include monochrome pieces whose tones — "bullock's blood (*sang de bœuf*)," "peach-blow," coral-red, blue, green, yellow, a brilliant black, and *aubergine*-purple — have a rich fullness of colour and a fine decorative value. The K'ang-hsi porcelains with painted decoration include two great categories: on the one hand, decoration in underglaze blue on a white ground, a type already popular under the Ming period, but which now achieved an incomparable purity of material and intensity of colour; and, on the other hand, polychrome decoration, which falls, in turn, into three classes: firstly, that executed in colours fired at a high temperature — blue, copper-red, celadon green, brownish yellow, and olive-brown, the most typical shade being copper-red, the shades of which range from chestnut to *sang de bœuf* and peach-blow. Next comes the class decorated in colour on biscuit, which is characterized by the use of three enamels, yellow, green, and violet, fired at a moderate temperature. To this class belong the pieces with the brilliant type of decoration on a black ground. Lastly we have the class with a coloured decora-

[1] See Hobson: *Catalogue of the Eumorfopoulos Collection, Ceramic*, Vol. V; Walter Bondy: *Kang Hsi, eine Bluth-Epoche der Porzellankunst* (Munich, 1923).



FIGURE 267

The emperor Ch'ien-lung receiving tribute of Kirghiz horses.
— Painting by Father Castiglione. Musée Guimet

tion known as "*famille verte*," so called because green predominates in it, though it really has a range of seven colours: dark green, pale green, *aubergine*-purple, yellow, greenish black, blue, and iron-red. This "*famille verte*" is the typical product of the K'ang-hsi style. The subjects, as in the Ming period, were still drawn from historical legends and romances, but we also see an increase in decoration in



FIGURE 268
Battle of Archul. Drawn by Father Attiret, engraved by Aliamet.
— *Musée Guimet*

the form of branches of flowers, butterflies, birds, and insects. In fact, porcelain became as much the mainstay of Chinese painting as silk.

Under Ch'ien-lung "*famille verte*" lost its vogue and was replaced by "*famille rose*," which really stands for the whole range of shades of red, from pale pink and coral-pink to a deep crimson.[1] The rest of the colours which predominated from this time onward were lemon-yellow, mustard-yellow, sulphur-yellow, and "crackle" blue. Lastly,

[1] Cf. G. C. Williamson: *The Book of Famille Rose* (London, 1926).

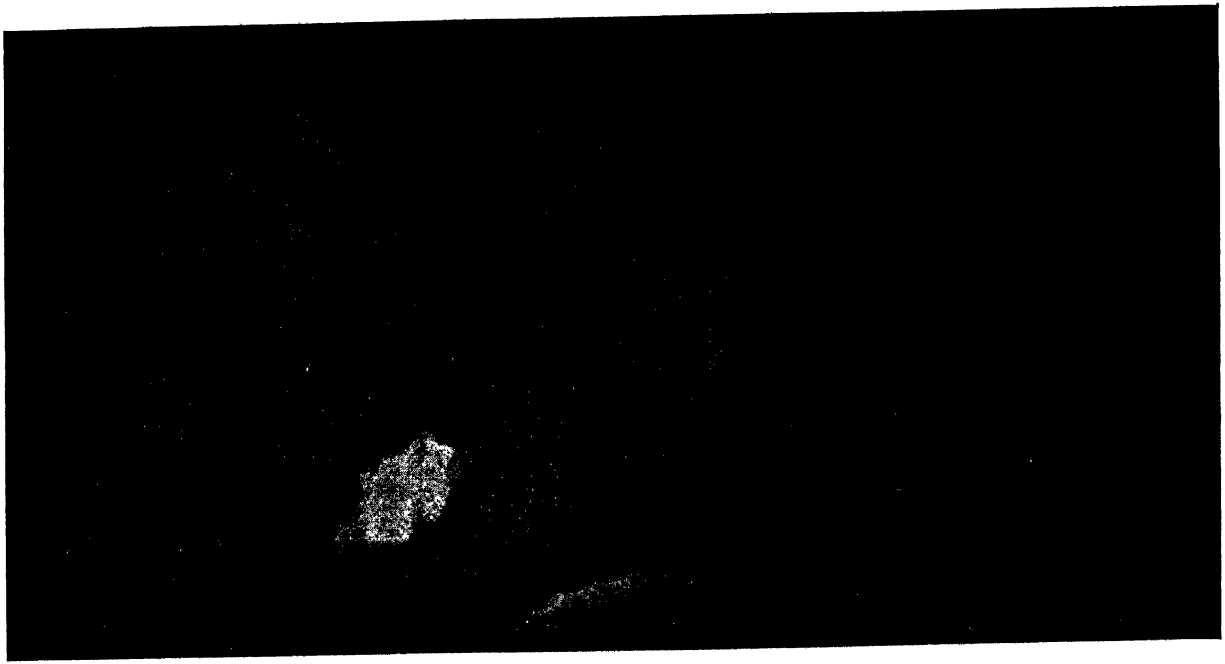


FIGURE 269

Landscape in the style of Chao Mēng-fu (fragment).
— *Musée Guimet*

the porcelain itself achieved products of such infinite delicacy as the " egg-shell " and " tea-dust " porcelains, those feats of an unrivalled technique. As for the subjects, whether landscapes, flowers, or birds, they can be compared only with the finest miniatures on French porcelain of the eighteenth century.

For close mutual relations existed between China and France in the eighteenth century. The remarks of Father d'Entrecolles in the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* (1712–22) bear witness to the interest which Europeans were in future to take in Chinese ceramics. The art of the Trianons in their later days constantly betrays the influence of that China which is to be seen in the screen-paintings and is, precisely, the China of Ch'ien-lung. Conversely, the curious porcelains once belonging to the Compagnie des Indes, now in the Musée Guimet, show us the Chinese imitating Europe so far as to reproduce love-scenes in the French eighteenth-century style and French versions of mythological subjects.

There is yet another piece of evidence of this imitation of Europe, in the shape of the works of Father Castiglione and his followers. The famous Jesuit arrived at Pekin in 1715 and died there in 1766 after winning the favour of Ch'ien-lung and painting at his command the horses in the imperial stables, or the portraits of the ladies of the palace — including the famous portrait of the " scented concubine " — or even the portrait of the Emperor himself (Fig. 267). It was also Father Castiglione, together with two other Jesuits, Attiret and Sichelbart, and the Augustinian friar Jean Damascène, who was commissioned by the Emperor between about 1760 and 1765 to draw scenes connected with the conquest of Turkestan. These designs were afterwards sent to France to be engraved under the supervision of Bertin, secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts (1765–74) (Fig. 268).

We may note in conclusion that there is an excellent set of these in the Musée Guimet, with a similar Chinese set, illustrating the wars

in Yunnan, etc., hanging opposite.[1] As M. Georges Salles has pointed out, there can be no better lesson on the permanent factors characterizing the Chinese canons of art and technique than a comparison of these two sets of views, subject by subject.

[1] The collection of M. Pierre Raindre contains another set of Chinese views of a similar character.



A
NOTE
ON THE
TYPE IN
WHICH THIS
BOOK IS SET

This book is composed on the Linotype in Bodoni, so-called after its designer, Giambattista Bodoni (1740–1813) a celebrated Italian scholar and printer. Bodoni planned his type especially for use on the more smoothly finished papers that came into vogue late in the eighteenth century and drew his letters with a mechanical regularity that is readily apparent on comparision with the less formal old style. Other characteristics that will be noted are the square serifs without fillet and the marked contrast between the light and heavy strokes.

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